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FROM THE EDITOR

Interest in Carpatho-Rusyns on the part of scholars and students of Slavic studies in the past few years has expanded impressively. Established scholars are stretching beyond their time-worn fields and are anxious to explore Rusyn history, literature, culture, and language. Likewise, graduate students are requesting materials and advice in pursuit of Carpatho-Rusyn studies. Some of my own undergraduates at The Evergreen State College are finding Rusyns a fascinating subject as a people poised between the East and West Slavic worlds, people whose "borderland" features have enriched their cultural heritage, people whose nationality-building process born and then interrupted in the nineteenth century is just now bearing fruit.

Written requests for guidance in pursuing Carpatho-Rusyn studies and especially for materials are continually addressed to the Carpatho-Rusyn Research Center and serve as evidence of the expanding worldwide interest in Carpatho-Rusyns. Links via the Internet among scholars and students of Carpatho-Rusyn studies are another way in which interested parties are and will be communicating and sharing information. This issue's article by Gregory Gressa about the first Carpatho-Rusyn site on the World Wide Web offers a tantalizing hint as to what lies ahead.

For the present, I've chosen a few of the many written requests for research materials and advice received by the Carpatho-Rusyn Research Center in the past two years. I wanted these scholars and students to speak for themselves in order to convey a firsthand sense for what they are seeking. It is gratifying to see that some of these researchers have drawn information from the *Carpatho-Rusyn American*.

I am a student at the History Department of the Pedagogical University in Hradec Králové. I am interested in the history of Subcarpathian Rus', especially between 1919 and 1945, and am going to start writing a work about the situation in Subcarpathian Rus' during the Second Czechoslovak Republic (1938-39). I take part in the activities of the Carpatho-Rusyn Friends Society in Prague. Together with some other university members we would like to undertake an expedition into Carpatho-Rusyn history. I am trying to find contacts with Rusyn organizations and specialists in this area. Please advise me.

Jan Morávek
Hradec Králové, Czech Republic
June 1994

I am writing as a Fellow from the University of Zurich where I am continuing studies begun at Harvard University on Serbo-Croatian and politics in the former Yugoslavia. It may be interesting for me and some of my colleagues at the Slavic Department to locate materials (grammars and dictionaries) in Lemko and Transcarpathian Rusyn dialects as well. Could you please suggest some key works and how I may be able to get them?

Jen Wang
Zurich, Switzerland
June 1995

I am currently writing up a grant proposal to conduct preliminary field research in the Prešov Region of Slovakia. My focus is on Rusyn ethnic identity in the post-socialist context. There are two crucial questions I am attempting to answer prior to leaving for Presov this summer: (1) Does the minority Rusyn population still seek an independent/autonomous region in Slovakia or Ukraine? (2) Is this issue politically contentious enough to lead to violence? or is the quest for Rusyn autonomy fading? I would greatly appreciate any help in researching these questions.

David Karjanen
Johns Hopkins University
February 1996

In 1973-75, I worked at the Department of Ukrainian Studies at Šafárik University in Prešov where I researched the syntax of Rusyn dialects in Eastern Slovakia (at that time we had to call them "Ukrainian" dialects). I wrote my doctoral dissertation and several articles on this subject. I am now an associate professor (*docent*) in the Department of Slovak Language, and am presently at the School of Slavonic and East European Studies at the University of London as a Teacher/Fellow in Slovak Language on a grant from the British Council. I would like to ask you to send me a copy of the study *Norms of Rusyn Orthography* by Jurij Pan'ko.

Dr. Juraj Van'ko
London, England
December 1995

I am interested in investigating the national revival among the Rusyns in the Prešov Region of Slovakia. I will, in fact, be going to Slovakia this coming fall on a Fulbright Scholarship to study the present-day situation of the Rusyn minority and the possibilities for a full-scale national movement. I will be studying under L'udovít Haraksim at the Academy of Sciences in Bratislava. I have read the relevant material in the *Carpatho-Rusyn American*. Are there recent articles in U.S. and European scholarly journals that you can recommend?

Andrew Yurkovsky
Milford, Connecticut
June 1995

As a PhD student I am doing a four-year research project on the relationship between the Roman Catholic Polish and Greek Catholic and Orthodox Rusyn communities in southeastern Poland. The working title of the project is "Stress-Reducing Mechanisms in Strained Interethnic Relations: The Case of the Rusyns and the Poles, 1848-Present." The aim of the research is to find out which factors and mechanisms have contributed, and still contribute, to periods of relative peace and stability between these two ethnic groups. I would appreciate if I could meet with you and some of the other staff members to discuss certain aspects of the Polish-Rusyn relationship in general and of my research project in particular.

Rosa Lehmann
Amsterdam, Netherlands
January 1996

IVAN PÁRKÁNYI

Dr. Ivan Párkányi (Parkanij), a former Czechoslovak minister and governor of interwar Subcarpathian Rus', has recently celebrated his one-hundredth birthday. Párkányi was born on January 1, 1896 in the village where his father served as an elementary school teacher—Teresova in Maramaroš county of the former Hungarian Kingdom, today renamed Tarasivka in Ukraine's province of Transcarpathia (Subcarpathian Rus'). After graduation from *gymnasium* (high school), he studied law first at the academy in Sighet and then at Pázmány University in Budapest, where he obtained a doctoral degree in 1918.

Soon after completing his studies, enormous political changes took place in Europe that were to alter the direction of Párkányi's career. World War I ended in November 1918, the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy collapsed, and Rusyns living south of the Carpathians joined the new independent state of Czechoslovakia. Thus, soon after Párkányi returned to his homeland he was in a new country. The Czechoslovak authorities engaged him in their administration in Subcarpathian Rus', and between 1918 and 1921, he worked at the county level in Chust, Mukačevo, and Dovhe.

Recognizing his administrative abilities, in 1921 the government brought Párkányi to Prague, where he first worked in the office of the prime minister. Then, in 1924, he was transferred to the office of the founding president of Czechoslovakia, Tomáš G. Masaryk, to serve as special presidential advisor for Subcarpathian Rus'. He was to hold this post until the end of the first Czechoslovak republic in the fall of 1938.

During the interwar years, Párkányi was the only Rusyn of political influence in the Czechoslovak capital who could provide assistance to his fellow countrymen and students when they needed help. Many Rusyns came to Prague in search of work, and it was Párkányi who often found jobs for them. As well he was responsible for the establishment of a dormitory for Rusyn university students in Prague.

Another of his goals was the establishment of a Greek Catholic parish in the country's capital, so that Rusyns living there temporarily or permanently would have a place worship of their own. He wrote the charter for the establishment of a Greek Catholic parish and served as its first president. By 1926, the first Greek Catholic liturgies were being held at various Roman Catholic churches; then in 1931, the Archbishop of Prague donated St. Clement's church (one of the prime baroque churches in the center of the city near the Charles Bridge) to the Greek Catholics. The Pope officially confirmed the parish in 1935, and Párkányi served as its curator for many years. He also deserves credit for the return of St. Clement's to the Greek Catholics during the Prague Spring of 1968, after the church had been given to the Orthodox Church in 1952, following the communist regime's ban of Greek Catholicism. For his efforts to establish a Greek Catholic parish in Prague and his tireless work for the well-being of his people, in 1938 Pope Pius XI awarded Párkányi the highest lay honor, naming him a Knight-Commander of the Order of St. Sylvester.

By 1938, Czechoslovakia was under constant threat from Nazi Germany. At the end of September, Hitler forced on the country the Munich Pact, which amputated certain territories and transformed the rest of Czechoslovakia into a federal state. During the short transitional period before Subcarpathian Rus' got its own autonomous government,



Párkányi became, on October 9, the last Prague-appointed governor of Czechoslovakia's far eastern province. He resigned, however, within two days when Subcarpathia was placed under its new autonomous government.

For Párkányi, the Munich Pact was the beginning of a great national and personal tragedy that culminated on March 15, 1939. On that day, Czechoslovakia ceased to exist. Bohemia and Moravia were occupied by Nazi Germany, Slovakia became a pro-German "independent" state, and his homeland of Subcarpathian Rus' was once more incorporated into Hungary. Under Nazi rule, he and his family survived with great difficulty the rest of World War II. When the war ended in 1945 and Czechoslovakia was restored as an independent country (although without Subcarpathian Rus'), Párkányi returned to government service as an official in the Foundation for National Renewal (Fond Národní Obnovy) and then again back in the president's office, as head of Finance and Budget and as the officer for Economic Development. Párkányi's postwar career in government was short-lived, however, because the new communist regime, which took over the country in February 1948, forced him to retire within four years.

During his quarter century of service in the office of Czechoslovakia's first two presidents, Tomáš G. Masaryk and Edvard Beneš, Dr. Ivan Párkányi experienced many successes but also many difficult times, especially during the Munich crisis, World War II, and the period of communist rule after 1948. Throughout his career, he was inspired by a love of Subcarpathian Rus', his Rusyn people, and his family. He has always been proud to be a Rusyn and, as a deeply religious person, has remained a devout Greek Catholic. At present, he lives quietly in Prague. After the untimely death of his wife Olga in a tragic automobile accident in 1987, his two loving daughters care for him. His life is full of remembrances of all the loved ones who are no longer alive and of his Subcarpathian homeland in Czechoslovakia which he has never betrayed, and which has always remained in his heart.

Cyril Párkányi
Boca Raton, Florida

THE CARPATHO-RUSYNS (part 4)

This is the fourth part of a general introductory article on all aspects of Carpatho-Rusyn life which we began in the Summer 1995 issue of the Carpatho-Rusyn American (Vol. XVIII, No. 2). Considering the enormous changes that have taken place in the European homeland during the past few years, we feel it appropriate to provide our readers with new and updated information. —Editor

History (continued)

The sixteenth century began a period of transformation in the socioeconomic and religious life of Carpatho-Rusyns. North of the mountains, Polish landlords expanded their estates into the Lemko Region where the local Rusyn peasant population became ensnared. This meant that landlords steadily acquired control over all aspects of a peasant's life, including the amount of work a peasant family had to perform on the landlord's estate, the amount of taxes a peasant household had to pay, even when and to whom peasants could marry. In order to ensure that these duties were fulfilled, Rusyn peasants were forbidden to leave their property, even temporarily, without the permission of the landlord. In effect, the serf became legally tied to the land.

South of the mountains the Hungarian government also passed laws (1514) that established serfdom in the countryside. Those laws were for some time not enforceable, however. This is because Hungary was invaded by the Ottoman Turks, who annihilated the Hungarian army in 1526, and who within a few decades came to control nearly three-quarters of the country. For nearly the next two centuries all that remained of Hungary was a small strip of territory under Habsburg Austria (primarily what is today Slovakia and part of Croatia) and the semi-independent principality of Transylvania (present-day central Romania) in the east. The Catholic Habsburgs spent as much time fighting their rivals for control of Hungary—the Protestant princes of Transylvania—as they did the Ottoman Turks.

Tucked in between Transylvania and Habsburg-controlled Hungary was Carpathian Rus', which for most of the late sixteenth and seventeenth centuries was ravaged by the conflicts between the military forces of Catholic Austria and Protestant Transylvania. Villages were frequently destroyed by marauding troops and the size of the Rusyn population declined because of flight or death by disease brought in the wake of foreign soldiers. Frustrated with their fate, many Rusyns joined Hungary's independent Transylvanian princes in their struggle against the Habsburgs. For instance, during the last great anti-Habsburg rebellion, the armies of the Transylvanian Hungarian Prince Ferenc II Rákóczi (who was raised in the family castle of Mukačevo) was made up largely of Rusyn peasants. Even though Rákóczi was finally defeated in 1711, a Hungarian legend arose about Rusyns and how they proved to be a people most faithful (*gens fidelissima*) to "their" prince and country. Another result of the defeat of Rákóczi was the full implementation of Austrian Habsburg rule throughout all of Hungary. For Carpathian Rus' this meant the influx of new Austro-Germanic landlords, like the Schönborn family, which during



Bishop Andrej Bačyns'kyj (1732-1809, consecrated 1773), the most important Carpatho-Rusyn religious and cultural leader at the turn of the nineteenth century.

the eighteenth century came to control large tracts of land and numerous Rusyn villages.

The Carpatho-Rusyn Orthodox church in Hungary was also caught up in the political rivalry between Catholic Austria and Protestant Transylvania. At the same time, Poland's Catholic rulers were becoming increasingly alarmed at the rapid spread of Protestantism within their realm. Faced with such political and religious rivalries, several Orthodox priests and a few bishops, first in Poland and then in Hungary, decided to join the Catholic church and to recognize the authority of the Pope. This was confirmed by agreements reached at the Union of Brest (1595) and the Union of Užhorod (1646), after which the Uniate church came into being. In the course of the next century, the Orthodox church was banned and all Carpatho-Rusyns became officially Uniate or, as they came to be known after the 1770s, Greek Catholic.

Unlike the Orthodox, the Uniate/Greek Catholics were recognized as a Habsburg state church, and in 1771 received their own independent Greek Catholic eparchy (diocese) of Mukačevo. Financially supported by the Austrian Habsburg authorities, the Greek Catholic church by the late eighteenth century operated elementary schools and academies for seminarians in which the Rusyn and Church Slavonic languages were taught. From these institutions came Greek Catholic clerics (Ioanniky Bazylovyč, Mychal Lučkaj), who during the second half of the eighteenth and first half of the nineteenth centuries wrote the first histories of the Carpatho-Rusyns.

The rise of nationalism throughout Europe during the nineteenth century also reached the Carpatho-Rusyns. They became particularly active as a group following the revolution of 1848 and what turned out to be Hungary's failed war



Adol'f Dobrjans'kyj, Carpatho-Rusyn political and cultural activist during the second half of the nineteenth century.

of independence against Habsburg Austria. The short revolutionary period of 1848-1849 did, however, produce three important results: the abolition of serfdom; the arrival on the throne of a new Habsburg emperor, Franz Joseph (who was to rule until 1916); and the beginnings of a Rusyn national revival.

The Rusyn national revival was largely the work of two individuals. One was the Greek Catholic priest Aleksander Duchnovyč (1803-1865), who in the 1850s founded the first Rusyn cultural society (in Prešov), published the first literary almanacs and elementary schoolbooks, and wrote the lines to what became the Rusyn national credo: *Ja Rusyn býl, jsm i budu* (I was, am, and will remain a Rusyn) and the Rusyn national anthem: *Podkarpatskî rusyný, ostavte hluboký son* (Subcarpathian Rusyns, Arise from Your Deep Slumber). The other, Adol'f Dobrjans'kyj (1817-1902), was a member of the Hungarian parliament and Austrian government official who between 1849 and 1865 attempted to create a distinct Rusyn territorial entity within the Habsburg Empire.

Following political changes in the Habsburg Empire during the 1860s, the last decades of the nineteenth century turned out to be a difficult time for Carpatho-Rusyns. The empire was transformed into the Austro-Hungarian Dual Monarchy, which in practice meant that the Hungarian authorities could rule their "half" of the state without any intervention by the imperial government in Vienna. By the 1870s, the Hungarian government set out on a course to enhance the status of the Magyars and their language and culture. As a result, the Carpatho-Rusyn national revival

was stopped by the rise of Hungarian chauvinism. At the same time, widespread poverty caused in part by an increase in population and land shortages forced thousands of young men and entire families to emigrate. A few thousand Carpatho-Rusyns moved to the Bačka region (Vojvodina) in the southern part of the Hungarian Kingdom, where the first Rusyn colonists had arrived as early as 1745. A much larger number, estimated between 175,000 and 200,000, left between the 1880s and 1914 for the industrial regions of the northeast United States.

The mid-nineteenth century cultural revival led by Duchnovyč and Dobrjans'kyj was able to preserve a sense of Carpatho-Rusyn national identity. It was not successful, however, in the effort to obtain autonomy or a political status specifically for Carpatho-Rusyns. All that was to change with the outbreak of World War I in 1914. For the next four years, thousands of Carpatho-Rusyns served loyally in the imperial Austro-Hungarian army where many died or were wounded on the eastern front against Russia or in the killing fields of northeastern Italy. The war years also brought another kind of tragedy, especially for Rusyns in the Lemko Region. In 1914-1915, when tsarist Russia occupied most of Galicia, Austrian officials suspected Lemko Rusyns of treason and deported nearly 6,000 to concentration camps, especially at Talerhof near the city of Graz in Austria.

When the war ended in late 1918, the Austro-Hungarian Empire ceased to exist. Carpatho-Rusyn immigrants in the United States had already begun to meet in the summer of 1918, and under their leader Gregory Žatkovyč (1886-1967) they eventually supported the idea of a fully autonomous "Rusyn state" within the new country of Czechoslovakia. The idea of Carpatho-Rusyn autonomy or statehood was also accepted in the European homeland. The postwar republic of Hungary responded by creating an autonomous Rusyn Land (Rus'ka Krajina) in December 1918, at the same time while Carpatho-Rusyn leaders were meeting between November 1918 and January 1919 in various national councils that called for union with either Hungary, Russia, Ukraine, or Czechoslovakia. Finally, in May 1919, Carpatho-Rusyns living south of the mountains met in Užhorod, where they decided that their homeland, Carpathian Rus', should be united as a "third state" with the new republic of Czechoslovakia.

The Lemko Rusyns north of the mountains expected to be part of Carpathian Rus' as well, but were rejected by Czechoslovakia. Instead, they created an independent Lemko Rusyn Republic based in the town of Gorlice. The Lemko Republic lasted for nearly sixteen months until March 1920, when its government headed by Jaroslav Kačmarčyk (1885-194?) was arrested and its territory incorporated into Poland. Finally, the 10,000 or so Rusyns living in the Vojvodina (Bačka) region of southern Hungary joined a Serbian-dominated national congress and voted in November 1918 to be part of the new kingdom of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes (later Yugoslavia).

To be continued

Paul Robert Magocsi
Toronto, Ontario

INTERVIEW WITH JÁN BOTÍK

Dr. Ján Botík, a curator at the Slovak National Museum in Bratislava, Slovakia, is in charge of the Division for Slovaks in Slovakia and Abroad and National Minorities in Slovakia. He was one of two chief editors overseeing the compilation of the new Encyklopédia ľudovej kultúry Slovenska (Encyclopedia of Folk Culture of Slovakia), published in 1995, which includes articles about Rusyns. Dr. Botík is presently in Olympia, Washington, where his wife, Dr. Marta Botíková, is a Fulbright Scholar in Residence at The Evergreen State College. —Editor

What was the goal of the Ethnology Section of the Slovak Academy of Sciences in compiling the *Encyclopedia of Folk Culture of Slovakia*?

In spite of the fact that the science of ethnography (ethnology) is a relatively young discipline in Slovakia, we have at our disposal a vast amount of information dispersed throughout numerous journals, collections of articles, and books in several languages. We decided that the time had come for this information to be made available to the professional and wider public in the form of a well-organized and high quality encyclopedic compilation. Our encyclopedia provides information collected by several generations of ethnographers, folklorists, museologists, and other specialists on various aspects of folk culture. We also cover the most significant concepts, categories, methods, and directions of ethnographic research, as well as the most important individuals, institutions, and periodicals connected with ethnography in Slovakia. We based our study and inclusion of materials on the ethnic-territorial principle.

How did you define “ethnic-territorial principle”?

In the choice and processing of ethnographic materials for the encyclopedia, the determining criterion was their subjects' connection with the territory of the Slovak Republic and with the Slovaks as an ethnic group. Thus we included materials about Slovaks living outside the borders of Slovakia, as well as materials about non-Slovak ethnic groups who reside within the borders of Slovakia.

How was this principle applied in the inclusion of information about Rusyns in Slovakia?

Naturally, the encyclopedia concentrates on ethnic Slovak society, but we wanted to show the ethnic diversity within Slovakia, which includes Hungarians, Rusyns, Jews, Croats, Gypsies, Czechs, and others. Thus, we included information about all these groups in individual articles, and among them is an article entitled “Rusyns in Slovakia.” The article discusses their ethnogenesis, historical and ethnocultural development, and elements of their traditional folk culture. In this main article, reference is also made to other entries in the encyclopedia where there is additional information on specific topics related to Rusyn history and society as it developed in Slovakia, such as the “Valachian colonization,” “Lemkos,” “Bojkos,” “Pujdaks,” and “Ukrainians in Slovakia.” Information about fundamental elements of traditional Rusyn culture is also covered in other entries, such as “Icons,” “Icon Screen,” “Pascha,” and so

on. In addition, entries on individuals also provide biographical information about outstanding scholars of Rusyn and Ukrainian background, such as Mykola Mušynka, Orest Zilyns'kyj, and Volodymyr Hnatjuk, as well as information about significant establishments involved in research on Rusyns, such as the Museum of Ukrainian Culture in Svidník.

Within Slovakia, Rusyns and Slovaks have lived as close neighbors for several centuries. What do folklorists see as some of the similarities and differences between Rusyn and Slovak folklore?

Rusyns and Slovaks have lived for centuries in north-east Slovakia, either in neighboring regions, in regions of adjacent Slovak and Rusyn villages, or in villages populated by both Rusyns and Slovaks. Coping with the same geographical and economic conditions led them to develop and employ certain common elements in their economic activities connected with agriculture, cattle breeding, and sheep herding, and in other areas of material culture. For instance, Rusyns and Slovaks traditionally built the same kinds of houses, wooden with thatched or shingle roofs. Furniture, cooking utensils, and other kinds of everyday equipment were the same in traditional Rusyn and Slovak village homes. In spite of the preponderance of shared elements, there did appear features of material culture which distinguished Rusyns from Slovaks. Rusyns, for instance, tended to use the anteroom to their homes for the hand-threshing of grain. They also built their indoor stoves without hearths, and used the inside of the stove not only for heating and baking, but also for cooking. Also specifically Rusyn in style are buildings for the storage of hay. These buildings (*oborohy*) are constructed with four-sided roofs attached at the corners to four posts stuck into the ground which allow the roofs to move vertically up and down, depending on the amount of hay under them.

In the area of spiritual culture, Rusyns and Slovaks are more distinct from each other than in material culture. Slovaks are largely Roman Catholic and Lutheran, while Rusyns are mostly Greek Catholic or Orthodox. Rusyns are particularly known for their Eastern-rite wooden churches, characterized by particular kinds of construction, architecture, and functional and artistic features. Other items also distinguish Rusyn culture, such as the *velija* (Christmas Eve supper), Pascha (Eastern Christian Easter), Rusyn weddings, the *chorovod* or round dance, and polyphonic singing. Shared and distinguishing features in the folk culture of Rusyns and Slovaks were studied in great detail on the basis of the folk ballad by the scholar Orest Zilyns'kyj.

By giving Rusyns a separate article in the encyclopedia, you clearly signify that Slovak ethnographers see Rusyns as a distinct ethnic group in Slovakia. Is this so?

There is no question that Rusyns are a distinct ethnic group with all the substantial components and attributes of an ethnic group. They have their own ethnonym and ethnic terminology, their own language with its literary norm, their own traditional and professional culture with explicit elements of ethnic and national specificity, as well as their own Rusyn ethnic consciousness.

What is the difference between Rusyns and Ukrainians in eastern Slovakia in terms of ethnicity, politics, and culture?

There is only one ethnic group with ties to East Slavic ethnicity living in eastern Slovakia. These people are Rusyns and call themselves Rusyns, and the Slovaks living there also call them Rusyns. There is no other indigenous East Slavic ethnic group in eastern Slovakia which has age-old roots in Slovak territory. There is, however, a political movement which attempts to identify Rusyns with Dnieper Ukrainians.

How do Slovak scholars see the Rusyn revival in terms of culture and society within Slovakia?

The Rusyn revival is a living and evolving process which has not yet crystallized. One still finds more than one ethnic term employed for Rusyns (*Rusini*, *Karpatorusi*, *Ukrajinci* [Rusyns, Carpatho-Russians, Ukrainians]), the use of different languages (*jazyčie*, *ukrajiničina*, *rusinčina* [mixed jargon, Ukrainian, Rusyn]), and to some extent varying ethnic consciousnesses usually connected with the use of one or another of the ethnonyms. The greatest handicap in a nationality-building process toward any independent political nation of Rusyns is their dispersion on the territories of several countries—Slovakia, Poland, Ukraine, Yugoslavia. Nothing, however, stands in the way of the Rusyns' existence in Slovakia as a well-rounded, consolidated, and vigorous national minority, and I believe that as long as there exists larger national and political support for the existence of Rusyn ethnicity and a distinct Rusyn culture, the revival will bear fruit.

IN MEMORIAM: PETER BAYCURA

On March 12, 1996, the American Carpatho-Rusyn community experienced a great loss in the death of Peter Baycura. He was a man of generous spirit and a steward of cultural continuity. A son of Carpatho-Rusyn immigrants, Peter was a communicator and culture builder. He stood apart from many of his generation in his vibrant awareness and celebration of his Rusyn heritage. Likewise, he was able to rise above the religious factional problems of his time. A devout Byzantine Catholic, he was also on the faculty at the American Carpatho-Russian Orthodox Seminary in Johnstown, Pennsylvania, where he taught public relations. In the late 1980s, he wrote a series of articles on the demise of communism in Eastern Europe for the *Byzantine Catholic World* newspaper, and at the same time designed and illustrated a beautiful prayer book entitled *Come to Me* which was published by the Orthodox Johnstown Eparchy. Peter's broad vision ought to be an example to us all.

We at the Carpatho-Rusyn Society in Pittsburgh appreciated his sense of humor, good will, honesty, and laughter. It was Peter, in fact, who inspired us four years ago to contemplate the creation of the society and who helped organize its founding and planning committee. In 1992, he took his family and grandchildren on a personal family heritage tour to the Rusyn town of Čabiny in Slovakia, showing them where he was born and introducing them to their European Rusyn relatives. He subsequently wrote a touching account of that journey for the *Carpatho-Rusyn American* (Vol. XVII, No. 1, 1994). Striving to strengthen ties between our American and European communities, Peter travelled to Krynica, Poland in 1993 to participate in the Second World Congress of Rusyns where he showed himself to be a helpful advisor and a true compatriot and friend.

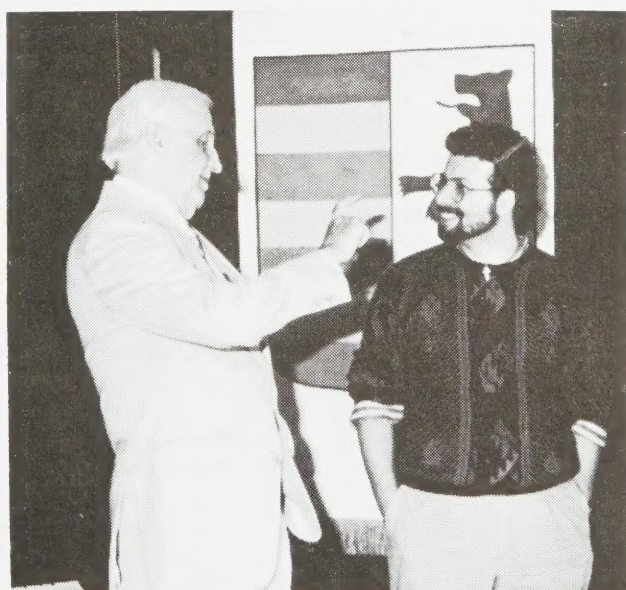
From 1989 to 1991, Peter served as the first communications officer on the board of the Carpatho-Rusyn Research Center. He also worked closely with the C-RRC in the design of its popular brochure on Carpatho-Rusyns which has been translated into several languages and serves as an accurate and up-to-date description of the history and current status of Carpatho-Rusyns worldwide. At every turn in the road, Peter helped expand our understanding of how the

C-RRC could be instrumental in aiding and supporting Rusyns in the homeland. His energy and enthusiasm inspired us all.

Peter used his expertise in publications also for the church. He was the editor of the anniversary album for St. John The Baptist Byzantine Catholic Church in Lyndora, Pennsylvania, a publication so masterfully designed that it has become a model for other parishes engaged in producing historical albums. In this and all of his activities, Peter had a special talent for getting people involved. At the same time he succeeded in awakening many people to the goodness of their Rusyn cultural heritage.

Peter is sorely missed—as a husband, father, grandfather, Rusyn-American activist, and friend. We thank him for making his life a gift to all of us. *Blažennyj pokoj, vičnaja jemu pamjat'.*

Jerry J. Jumba
McKees Rocks, Pennsylvania



Peter Baycura (left) in a typically animated conversation with John Righetti at a meeting of the Carpatho-Rusyn Research Center in Pittsburgh, April 1990.

RUSYNS IN CYBERSPACE

In May 1995, the **Carpatho-Rusyn Knowledge Base** was launched on the Internet's World Wide Web. This event represents an exciting new development for Rusyns throughout the world. As a co-founder of this site, I would like to familiarize readers of the *Carpatho-Rusyn American* with our activities and to invite you all to visit us.

The Internet is a vast network of computer networks all around the world. No one government, university, or other entity owns the network. Originally it was comprised of only university and government computer networks. Today it has grown to the extent that anyone with a computer and a modem is able to connect. It is estimated that over 20 million people are currently connected, and the number grows daily. The World Wide Web is the graphical, multimedia part of the Internet and is commonly referred to as "the Web." It is a point and click environment that enables users to find information quickly and easily via "hyperlinks" contained within documents. Click a highlighted word and you are transported to that computer containing the document. It is possible to access information immediately in any country on the globe.

The idea for creating a home for Rusyns on the World Wide Web (www) began with a notice by Rich Custer in the *New Rusyn Times*, the newsletter of the Carpatho-Rusyn Society in Pittsburgh. He inquired if any member could create and maintain a page on the internet for the Society. This caught my interest. I am a computer programmer by profession and have a great interest in the Internet, as well as in my Lemko-Rusyn background. I began working on the concept in March 1995 and sent a functional demo to genealogist Megan Smolenyak for evaluation. This demo was then passed along to the Carpatho-Rusyn Society. Their page was unveiled in May and has grown steadily. It continues to evolve, almost on a weekly basis.

What originally began as just a page for the Carpatho-Rusyn Society has grown into what I affectionately refer to as "our country in cyberspace." The **Carpatho-Rusyn Knowledge Base** is a place where people from around the world can visit and "talk" with us via e-mail or just drop in and learn about our history, culture, customs, folklore, religions, literature, as well as current events dealing with Rusyns both here and in Europe. Links or addresses are provided for every Rusyn organization in the world. Another focus of the site is helping people get started with the sometimes frustrating and difficult process of Rusyn genealogy as they seek to rediscover their heritage.

In connection with genealogy, a recent major addition to the site is "The Carpatho-Rusyn Surname Project." This works as follows. People searching for information on villages and/or surnames have the ability now to submit their information to me. I then place it on the web along with their e-mail address so that others can contact and share information with them. This is very exciting for people researching their Rusyn roots. Submissions have been coming in at a fair pace and the list is growing.

Along with a collection of Rusyn art available to our visitors, we now have map images of the Rusyn East Central European homeland contributed by Mark Mihalasky from

New Jersey. These images are created with digital terrain data and look almost like satellite photos. Mark has superimposed Rusyn settlement areas on the images, including cities and towns. One image is a color-coded terrain map showing each elevation in a different color. Other images on the site have been contributed by readers and include photographs of villages and churches. Rich Custer has contributed some graphics as well. The site must be viewed with NetScape software in order to be fully appreciated.

All of this would not be possible without the generosity and hard work of many people, most notably Dr. Paul R. Magocsi who allows us to place items authored by him on the site, Rich Custer for providing much information as well as valuable insights and material, and Megan Smolenyak for fielding e-mail, providing ideas and inspiration regarding content, and contacting people in an effort to gain new material. Among others who have contributed material or have granted permission to use items authored by them are genealogist Tom Peters, Andrew Fabula, George Warholc, Susyn Mihalasky, the *Greek Catholic Union Magazine*, Helene Cincebeaux, John Hudick, the Rusin Association of Minnesota, *The Smolenak Family Newsletter*, and many Carpatho-Rusyn Society members.

I myself am a third-generation Lemko Rusyn born in the United States. My grandfather, Ivan Gressa, arrived here in 1912 from the village of Rzepedz (Rusyn: Repid'), now in Poland, with his two brothers and worked in the mines in the anthracite region of eastern Pennsylvania. Relatives left behind in the homeland eventually were displaced during the 1947 Vistula Operation. The driving force behind my creation and dedication to the **Carpatho-Rusyn Knowledge Base** comes from a deep respect and appreciation of our brave ancestors who left their homes to make a better life.

We ought to share information about Rusyns and their history and culture with the rest of the world. Our culture must be preserved, maintained, and presented to others so that it does not vanish. We may never have had a country to call our own, but now we have an "electronic country" of sorts in cyberspace. Despite the impression of cold, impersonal technology that computers convey to most people, our "Ruthenica Electronica" is a warm, friendly place. The entire site is funded by me personally, and was recently rated by Lycos/Point Survey as among the Top 5% of all sites on the World Wide Web based on content, presentation, and a few other criteria. I am grateful for what all of us have been able to accomplish together in building this site in the past year.

As of this writing, we have already experienced our first contacts with Rusyns in the European homeland. We look forward to hearing from the homeland more in the future, but understand that their shortage of computers limits their internet capability at the present time.

We warmly invite you to visit our site at:

<http://www.carpatho-rusyn.org.carpatho>

(designed for, and best viewed with NetScape software).

Gregory Gressa
Davidsburg, Michigan

THE CARPATHO-RUSYN MICROFILM PROJECT

Bogdan Horbal, a young scholar residing in New York City, has been studying materials in the Carpatho-Rusyn Microfilm Project for the last few years. In this article he introduces himself and discusses his work on the project.
—Editor

I was born in Poland. My parents are Lemkos, that is, Carpatho-Rusyns living in the historic province of Galicia north of the Carpathian Mountains. I studied history at the University of Wrocław in Poland. The title of my master's thesis was "Political Activity Among the Lemkos from 1918 to 1921." The thesis covers only three years, yet it was the only period in the history of the Lemkos when they not only talked about the future, but actually tried to shape our own people's destiny. At numerous meetings, Lemko activists (mostly Greek Catholic priests, teachers, lawyers, and educated peasants) raised the case of the Carpatho-Rusyns in Galicia and put pressure on the Paris Peace Conference to grant Lemkos the right of self-determination.

At that time, the most prevalent national orientation among Carpatho-Rusyns on the northern slopes of the Carpathians was the Russian or Russophile orientation. Large numbers of Lemkos believed that they were a subgroup of the Russian nationality. Hence, they wanted to be unified with "Mother Russia." Only a few Lemkos espoused a Rusyn or a Ukrainian identity and supported these orientations. Today the situation is much different. The only politically viable national orientations are the Rusyn and the Ukrainian. The Russian orientation belongs to the past and no longer has any political influence.

I began my research already in Poland. In the beginning it was very difficult. Nobody had written on Lemko politics of 1918-1921 in any detail. In addition, I had much difficulty finding even primary sources. Archives in Cracow and Przemyśl contained some interesting materials, and Polish newspapers of that time also paid some attention to events in the Lemko Region. Although I found little, I was nevertheless satisfied because our knowledge of the Lemko Republic was so small that whatever I found was important. I wrote a small article for a Lemko newspaper in Poland in which I offered new information. After I managed to prepare the first chapter of my thesis, I decided to continue my search for historical materials in the United States.

While still in Poland, I learned about the New York Public Library and discovered that its Slavic section was vast and excellent, but I did not know anything about the Carpatho-Rusyn Microfilm Project collection. I cannot describe adequately my surprise when I discovered this collection. For starters, I had not known about the collection's printed *Guide to Newspapers and Periodicals*. The first time I accessed the collection I was given an entire catalogue drawer. I began taking notes and suddenly realized that it contained a whole lifetime's supply of information not for a single researcher, but for an entire group of researchers. I knew that the only way of working with this collection was to read systematically one item after another. I was so ecstatic that I wanted to request all of the newspapers at once.

What should I read first? What a great and wonderful decision to have to make! I was like a kid in a candy store, and not very organized at first. I ordered one reel of the

Amerykanskij russkij viestnik, one reel of *Karpatorusskij kalendar Lemko-Sojuza*, and also one reel of *Prikarpat'skaja Rus'*, and so on. And thus the whole unknown world of Carpatho-Rusyn immigration was uncovered for me. I learned about different political parties, church orientations, social and cultural organizations among Carpatho-Rusyns—the list goes on. It was a fascinating and large immigrant community, but unfortunately divided against itself.

The collection I discovered changed my view of the thesis. In Poland I had learned a little about activities of Carpatho-Rusyns in the United States. Of course, I hoped to find more information about the immigrant community here, but I never expected to come across such a significant number of American Carpatho-Rusyn newspapers or to gain such insights into Carpatho-Rusyn political, cultural, and even military life throughout the world.

What were some of the specific pieces of information that emerged from my search? I learned, for instance, about the League for the Liberation of Carpatho-Russia, which was formed in New York City in 1917. Two years later, the league sent a four-person delegation to the Paris Peace Conference in order to represent Carpatho-Rusyns. Three congresses organized by this group took place between 1917 and 1920. The last one was attended by 300 delegates and guests. The Carpatho-Rusyn delegates in Europe did not stay only in Paris. They went to London, Geneva, and Rome to talk about the "old country's" fate.

I also discovered the existence of the Carpatho-Rusyn Committee and small military units which were formed by Carpatho-Rusyn prisoners-of-war in Italy. Similar activity took place in the Russian city of Rostov-on-the-Don. A military unit created there joined the anti-Bolshevik White forces of Russian General Kornilov and fought by his side in the Kuban region of Ukraine. The Rus' National Council of Carpathian Rus' (Russka Narodna Rada Prikarpat'skoj Rusi), then based in Rostov-on-the-Don, was forced by the Bolsheviks to leave the city and to move thousands of miles eastward through Siberia to Vladivostok on the Pacific coast. From there six Carpatho-Rusyn leaders went to Japan and then to San Francisco. Those members of the organization who did not go east sailed across the Black Sea to Bulgaria or Turkey, eventually making their way to Czechoslovakia through the Balkans.

In the meantime, another group of Carpatho-Rusyns, led by a Lemko, Dr. Adrian Kopystjanskij, formed in Russia another Carpatho-Rusyn organization—the Carpatho-Rusian Council (Karpatorusskij Sovit). Its first congress took place in the Siberian city of Cheljabinsk, while the second one was in Omsk. Two Carpatho-Rusyn military units were also formed there and fought against the Bolsheviks in Siberia.

Information from all over the world came to New York City to the office of the League for the Liberation of Carpatho-Russia, whose name was later changed to the Carpatho-Russian National Organization in America. The organization published the newspaper *Prikarpat'skaja Rus'*. The microfilm collection I am working with contains only the first two years of this publication, but there are other newspapers. Among them are *Pravda* (Truth), published by the Russian Brotherhood Organization, and *Svit* (Light), published by the Russian Orthodox Catholic Mutual Aid Society of the U. S. A.

There is no calculating the time or money it would take to accomplish my research were I forced to travel to London, Paris, or Rome for such material. Instead, I am able to do my work in one place thanks to the efforts of the Carpatho-Rusyn Microfilm Project which collected and compiled so much material. Is there any chance that after the terrible years of revolution and civil war in Russia between 1917 and 1921, and after so many years of destructive communist rule, there might still be Carpatho-Rusyn-related materials somewhere in Rostov-on-the-Don, Cheljabinsk, or Omsk? I doubt it very much. But how convenient for now that I can sit in the New York Public Library and read about Carpatho-Rusyn activists visiting the American ambassador in Tokyo, Japan in the middle of 1919! My heartfelt thanks goes out to all those who have donated money to enlarge the Carpatho-Rusyn microfilm collection. Their gift benefits scholars everywhere.

Bogdan Horbal
New York, New York

Postscript: The Carpatho-Ruthenian Microfilm Project was created in 1975 at the Immigration History Research Center, University of Minnesota, with a matching grant in the amount of \$12,500 each from the Byzantine Ruthenian Metropolitan Province (at the time headed by Archbishop Stephen J. Kocisko) and the National Endowment for the Humanities in Washington, D. C. Upon completion in 1979, copies of the complete collection were deposited in the Slavic and Baltic Division of the New York Public Library, the University of Pittsburgh Library, and the John Carroll University Library in Cleveland, Ohio. Professor Frank Renkiewicz prepared *The Carpatho-Ruthenian Microfilm Project: A Guide to Newspapers and Periodicals* (Minneapolis, 1979).

A Forum on Carpatho-Rusyn Heritage

THE CARPATHO-RUSYN AMERICAN

The *Carpatho-Rusyn American* (ISSN 0749-9213) is a quarterly publication of the Carpatho-Rusyn Research Center Inc., a non-profit cultural organization whose purpose is to promote knowledge about all aspects of Carpatho-Rusyn culture through the publication and distribution of scholarly and educational material about the Carpatho-Rusyn heritage in Europe and America.

General inquiries concerning the Carpatho-Rusyn Research Center, and all communications concerning this publication, should be directed to:

Carpatho-Rusyn American
P.O. Box 192
Fairfax, VA 22030-0192
Phone: 703-691-8585
Fax: 703-691-0513

Patricia A. Krafcik, Editor
Jack Figel, Business Manager

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**THE INTERNATIONAL WORK OF THE
CARPATHO-RUSYN RESEARCH CENTER**

Ever since its establishment in 1978, the Carpatho-Rusyn Research Center has followed a policy of sending gratis its publications to students and scholars in east-central Europe who request our materials. Before 1989-1991, when Communist regimes were still in power, those researchers who received our materials were privately grateful but unable to mention in their own writings that some of their sources were from the "capitalist West." Moreover, many aspects of Carpatho-Rusyn history simply could not be discussed in the Soviet Union or in neighboring countries in the Soviet sphere.

Since the Revolution of 1989, however, things have changed. The C-RRC continues to send its materials gratis, knowing that researchers in east-central Europe do not have the economic means to purchase our books. In contrast to the "old days," all aspects of Carpatho-Rusyn history and culture can be discussed today, and the work of the C-RRC is publicly acknowledged. We are particularly pleased to be able to assist a younger generation of students in east-central Europe. The following letter from a university student in the Czech town of Hradec Králové, addressed to Professor Paul Robert Magocsi, president of the C-RRC, is indicative of the kind of contacts that have become possible in the new post-1989 world.

Dear Professor:

First of all, I would like to thank you very much for all the publications sent last summer which for me are invaluable.

Last week [November 1995] in Ostrava there was a student scholarly competition called History '95, in which I participated and presented the results of my work on the topic, "The Autumn of 1938 in Subcarpathian Rus'." I must admit that I did not expect that this subject would provoke such a great response in general as well as among the panel of expert judges. One of the members of the panel was Professor Jaroslav Mezník of Masaryk University in Brno. I learned for the first time that he is the son of the late Dr. Mezník, who was for a time [during the interwar years] the Czech vice-governor of Subcarpathian Rus'. Professor Mezník recommended that I research the papers of his father which are held in the Moravian Regional Archive in Brno.

In the end, of the 17 presentations submitted at the scholarly competition, mine was awarded first place, for which I must thank you, since the publications you sent were an indispensable source of information in the course of my work

Jan Morávek
Advanced School of Education
Hradec Králové, Czech Republic

OUR FRONT COVER

Graphic image of the World Wide Web site for the **Carpatho-Rusyn Knowledge Base.**

RECENT PUBLICATIONS IN ENGLISH ABOUT CARPATHO-RUSYNS, 1988

Items available from the Carpatho-Rusyn Research Center are indicated as such. Others can be obtained on request through Interlibrary Loan at many local libraries or directly from research libraries of major universities (California at Berkeley, Harvard, Illinois at Champaign-Urbana, Indiana, Toronto, Yale) or from the Cleveland Public Library, Library of Congress, and New York Public Library.
—Editor

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SINCE THE REVOLUTION

Užhorod, Ukraine. On December 2, 1995, a group that calls itself the Council of Rusyn Intelligentsia met to discuss the present economic and political situation in Subcarpathian Rus'/Transcarpathia. University professors Mychajl Ruščak, Ivan Kryvs'kyj, and Mykola Erdevdy were among the speakers.

The group submitted a petition to Ukraine's President Leonid Kučma and to the head of the Transcarpathian parliament (Narodna Rada) Serhij Ustyč, demanding that Transcarpathia be transformed into an autonomous republic within Ukraine. The group also accepted as a goal an economic program for agricultural development formulated by Mychajl Šarga.

—Volodymyr Tarachonyč

Budapest, Hungary. In December 1995 (and again in January 1996), Hungarian State Television (Program 2) broadcast an hour-long documentary entitled, "The European Traveler in Užhorod." The emphasis was on present-day life in Užhorod, the administrative center of Ukraine's Transcarpathian oblast (Subcarpathian Rus'). Particular attention was given to all the ethnocultural groups who live in the region, and specifically to the mentality and national characteristics of the Carpatho-Rusyns. Among Rusyn activists interviewed were the head of Užhorod's Duchnovyč Society, Vasyľ Rusyn, and the writer Volodymyr Fedynyšynec'. The film was produced by the popular Hungarian magazine, *Európa utas*, which will publish material from the program in its first issue for 1996.

—Volodymyr Tarachonyč



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1646 – 1996*

GUEST EDITORIAL

For Rusyn Americans summertime provides an opportunity to make contact with our roots in travel to the homeland and also participation in Rusyn folk festivals in the United States. As a Lemko-Rusyn American, I appreciate this chance to rediscover my roots and my heritage—not through books, but on a soft breeze that carries a Lemko-Rusyn melody to me from an outdoor performance stage, or through coming face to face with the present-day residue of some harsh but defining moments in Lemko-Rusyn history (see **THE LEMKO RUSYNS**, C-RA, Vol. X, No. 1, 1987, pp. 5-12). Such opportunities are available in the United States, almost exclusively in the New York/New Jersey area, where a heavy Lemko-Rusyn immigration has left scores of ethnically-aware descendants, and of course in the Lemko-Rusyn-inhabited regions of Poland.

Two major events in the American Lemko-Rusyn summer experience take place on the gently rolling forested hills of the beautiful 109-acre Lemko Park Resort. Located in Monroe, New York, the resort hosts both the Talerhof Day Memorial and the Lemko Day cultural festival.

Talerhof Day in early August is a somber event commemorating the loss of Lemko-Rusyn community leaders—largely Orthodox clergy, teachers, and intellectuals—in the infamous Austrian World War I era prison camp, Talerhof. Arrested and imprisoned for presumed pro-Russian sympathies at a time when the Austria-Hungary was at war with tsarist Russia, many did not survive the harsh camp conditions. Talerhof Day speaks of the suffering and survival of Lemko Rusyns as a small, vulnerable people trapped between larger forces. It is a vital, yet bittersweet component of the Lemko-Rusyn experience. The memorial service celebrated on that day is held at the Talerhof Memorial Chapel, which was built on the grounds of the Lemko Park and dedicated in 1964.

The basement of the Talerhof Memorial Chapel houses a small, but fascinating museum. It is filled with interesting artifacts and exhibits, including a list by province and village of Lemko Rusyns who perished in the prison camp. Also on display are folk embroideries, depictions of Lemko-Rusyn churches, monuments and historical sites in the homeland and in the United States, carved figures, crosses, *pysanky*, traditional wooden household items, and maps of Lemkovyna, the area of southeastern Poland historically inhabited by Lemko Rusyns until the 1947 Vistula Operation which forcibly deported hundreds of Rusyn families. This small gem of a museum is so packed with ethnic and cultural memorabilia that nearly every surface area is occupied, including the walls. For Lemko Rusyns seeking their roots, it is well worth the visit.

The Lemko Day cultural festival in late August is more in keeping with traditional summer fare. Before watching the formal stage program, festival participants may choose to stroll the grounds, eat homemade ethnic cuisine at Lemko Park's restaurant, or swim in the large outdoor pool. The three-hour stage program is held against a lovely backdrop of pine, maple, and oak trees. The program is a real celebration of Slavic identity, offering a wide variety of Lemko-Rusyn, Ukrainian, Slovak, and Russian folk singers, dancers, and musicians. After the cultural program, festival participants enjoy a delicious barbecue and dance on the shady hilltop dance floor.

Festivals in the Lemko-Rusyn homeland are more geographically dispersed, as the Lemko Rusyns themselves were after their involuntary resettlement in 1947. Several events take place in the Carpathian homeland, to which some Lemko Rusyns have returned since 1956. Other events take place in the flat region of Silesia in western Poland, where most Lemkos were resettled during the Vistula Operation.

Among other events, the three largest are the Vatra at Żdźnia, held in the Carpathian homeland in southeastern Poland in July, and the August Michałów Vatra of the Lemko Rusyns "in exile," held in Silesia, as well as the *Rusalja* or Pentecost Festival in early summer in Zydranowa. The vatrasy function both as ethnic town hall meetings and community picnics. They bring older Lemko Rusyns together to reminisce and grieve for a lost homeland and way of life. They also provide an occasion for young people to become acquainted with their heritage.

Like everything else that is Lemko Rusyn, however, the vatrasy have been caught up in the tug-of-war between the Rusyn and Ukrainian orientations. The Żdźnia Vatra, originally a creation of Lemko Rusyns who wished to express their culture in an apolitical manner, has come under the influence of Lemko Ukrainians. It has become markedly more Ukrainian than authentically Lemko Rusyn in both form and content. Ukrainian national flags are displayed where once no political emblems of any kind were present, and strictly Ukrainian culture rather than Lemko-Rusyn culture is predominant in the stage performance. This controversy over identity, expressed here in "festival form," is part and parcel of what it means to be Lemko Rusyn. No Lemko-Rusyn summer experience would be complete without firsthand exposure to these divisions and a witness to how they penetrate all aspects of Lemko community life.

The Michałów Vatra is smaller, but faithfully retains the indigenous culture and spirit of its founders. Authentic Lemko-Rusyn folkways predominate here. It is a significant sign of pan-Rusyn support that since the 1989 collapse of communism in Eastern Europe, revitalized Rusyn communities in neighboring countries now send their own folk ensembles to participate in the Michałów Vatra.

The *Rusalja* Festival is hosted by Fedir Gocz and his Museum of Lemko Culture (see **A VILLAGE MUSEUM**, C-RA, Vol. X, No. 2, 1987, pp. 4-8). Gocz himself is a living icon representing those who strive to preserve Rusyn culture. The *Rusalja* celebration is an excellent opportunity to enjoy authentic Lemko-Rusyn culture in an intimate atmosphere of small crowds. Contemporary Rusyn music is offered by youthful Lemko performers, and both Orthodox and Greek Catholic morning liturgies are held. The beautifully rendered open-air Lemko Cultural Museum is a treasure trove of authentic architecture, artifacts, and folk costumes that hearken back to a lifestyle and culture largely vanished since the deportation of Lemko Rusyns from southeastern Poland.

Again, for Rusyns in search of their Lemko-Rusyn roots or for non-Lemko Rusyns, a visit to the American festivals or to the vatrasy or *Rusalja* at the Gocz museum in Poland provides a summertime taste of the past and an encounter with the living reality of Rusyn life today.

Susyn Mihalasky
Associate Editor

METODYJ TROCHANOVSKIJ (1885-1947)

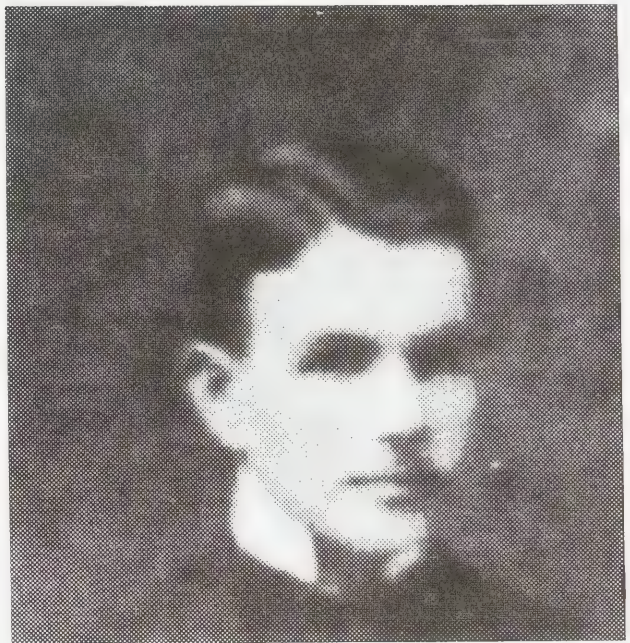
Metodyj Trochanovskij was born on May 5, 1885 in the Lemko Region village of Bińczarowa (Rusyn: Bil'careva). After receiving his pedagogical education at the Teacher's Seminary in Krosno, he taught at the elementary school in the Lemko village of Uhryń. In 1913, he married Konstancija Durkot, daughter of a prominent Lemko priest and civil activist, Father Ioann Chrysostom Durkot, and became involved in Lemko-Rusyn educational and social concerns. World War I put a stop to these activities, however. Together with dozens of Lemko leaders Trochanovskij was arrested, accused of treason against Austria-Hungary, and sentenced to death during the Second Vienna Trial of 1916. Fortunately, the execution was stayed, and he was in 1917 released from the Talerhof internment camp where he was sent.

The fall of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy gave Lemkos an opportunity to try to decide their own political fate. Trochanovskij found himself at the very heart of the movement for the establishment of the Rusyn National Republic of Lemkos and was a founding member of the *Russka Rada* (Rusyn Council) in Krynica. His support for Lemko teachers who refused to swear an oath of loyalty to the Polish state was well known to his own people and was even admired by some Poles. Although such political activity ultimately proved to be fruitless, the effort nevertheless helped to unify and galvanize the Lemko population.

In 1930, Trochanovskij and others organized in Krynica a festival called the Days of Rusyn Culture. Over two thousand Lemkos participated in a procession, which concluded with the raising and blessing of a memorial Talerhof Cross. During this same year, several political meetings also took place in Krynica. On these occasions Trochanovskij advised Lemkos to organize stores and credit unions in the region. He also underlined the danger of ukrainianization in the Lemko Region and advocated resistance against it. This matter was discussed at length at a meeting in Gorlice, where in October 1932 Lemko Region activists declared they should work to preserve and develop their own distinct Lemko culture and language. Trochanovskij advocated that this could be best achieved by introducing into Lemko schools a primer and readers written in the Lemko-Rusyn vernacular. Shortly thereafter, on December 8, 1933, the first ever Rusynophile oriented Lemko organization, the Lemko Sojuz (Lemko Association), was established in Sanok.

Trochanovskij became one of the most influential leaders in the Lemko Association. As part of his on-going cultural activity, he wrote the *Lemkivskyj bukvar* (Lemko Primer) and *Perša knyžečka* (First Reader), both of which would subsequently be introduced into Lemko Region schools. In order to provide the schools with professional teachers, Trochanovskij organized courses in the Lemko language at the Teacher's Seminary in Stary Sącz. He also became editor-in-chief of the Lemko vernacular newspaper, *Lemko* (1934-1939). Before long, the Krynica-based Lemko Association started successfully lobbying in Warsaw for financial support for Lemko-Rusyn interests and also expanded its horizons by corresponding with the Lemko Association of the United States and Canada.

Despite the Lemko Association's declared and proven loyalty to the Polish state, in 1936 a major shift in the Polish government's attitude toward the organization took place. Government financial support for Lemko-Rusyn activities



was systematically cut back. Ethnic Lemko teachers were systematically removed and replaced by ethnic Poles. Beginning in 1938, Trochanovskij's primer was banned. These negative developments forced Trochanovskij and other Lemko leaders to lodge protests in Warsaw, where despite promises they were unable to attain an audience with the Polish Prime Minister. Finally, the outbreak of World War II in September 1939 interrupted the decade-long struggle for the free expression of a Lemko-Rusyn identity, and it marked the start of a decade of physical and cultural devastation throughout the Lemko Region which was incorporated into Nazi Germany's Third Reich.

The Ukrainophiles, who had made considerable advances in the Lemko Region in the late 1930s, were able to promote further their cause during the Nazi occupation. Dozens of Ukrainian refugees from Soviet-controlled eastern Galicia settled in the Lemko Region after 1939 and worked to strengthen the Ukrainian national movement. Ukrainian activists provided lists of Russophile and Rusynophile Lemkos to the Nazis, who viewed them as a potential pro-Soviet fifth column in occupied Poland. Among those on the list was Trochanovskij, who was arrested on June 21, 1941 and imprisoned in Kielce until the last months of the war. When Soviet troops entered the Lemko Region in 1944, he was arrested again, this time by the NKVD during a general sweep of Poland's intelligentsia. Upon his release, the entire Trochanovskij family was resettled to Wrocław, where Metodyj died a few months later.

After Trochanovskij's death, Lemkos were dispersed to the Soviet Ukraine and to the far western regions of Poland. They were subjected to national assimilation and paralyzed by fear and apathy during the worse years of Stalinist terror. Any manifestation of Rusyn identity were considered illegal and counter-revolutionary. Despite the tragic times when Trochanovskij died, the traditions which he upheld are since 1989 in the post-communist era once again being manifested openly and with pride.

Bogdan Horbal
New York, New York

THE CARPATHO-RUSYNS (part 5)

This is the fifth and final part of a general introductory article on all aspects of Carpatho-Rusyn life which we began in the Summer 1995 issue of the Carpatho-Rusyn American (Vol. XVIII, No. 2). Considering the enormous changes that have taken place in the European homeland during the past few years, we feel it appropriate to provide our readers with new and updated information. —Editor

History (continued)

During the interwar years, Carpatho-Rusyns in Czechoslovakia lived for the most part in the province of Subcarpathian Rus' (Podkarpats'ka Rus'). They had their own governor, elected representatives in both houses of the national parliament in Prague, Rusyn-language schools, and they were considered one of the three "state peoples" of Czechoslovakia. They did not, however, receive the political autonomy they were promised in 1918-1919. Moreover, about 100,000 Carpatho-Rusyns in the Prešov Region were administratively separated from Subcarpathian Rus' and given only the status of a national minority within Slovakia. Despite such political problems compounded by existing difficult economic conditions made worse during world economic crisis of the 1930s, the Carpatho-Rusyns did enjoy an extensive national revival and marked improvement in their educational and cultural status during Czechoslovak rule. In particular, they learned how to live in a democratic society governed by the rule of law.

One result of the newly-found freedom was an increase in religious and national tensions. Left basically to themselves within a democratic Czechoslovakia, the Greek Catholic and Orthodox churches clashed with each other in competition for new adherents and for control of church property, while supporters of the Carpatho-Rusyn, Russian, and Ukrainian national orientations—each with its own organizations, schools, and publications—tried to convince the masses that they were either Rusyns, Russians, or Ukrainians.

In Poland, the Lemko Rusyns had no specific political status and no hopes for any kind of autonomy. Nevertheless, the Polish government did allow during the 1930s instruction in Lemko Rusyn in elementary schools and the establishment of civic and cultural organizations. Also, in 1934, the Greek Catholic church created a special administration for the Lemko Region that was no longer under the direct control of the Ukrainian Greek Catholic hierarchy.

On the eve of World War II, the status of Carpatho-Rusyns changed substantially. As a result of the Munich Pact of September 30, 1938, Czechoslovakia became a federal state. In early October, Subcarpathian Rus' finally received its own long-awaited autonomous government headed by Andrej Brodij (1895-1945). By November 1938, a second autonomous government headed by the local pro-Ukrainian leaders, Avhustyn Vološyn (1874-1945) and Julijan Revaj (1899-1978), changed the province's name to Carpatho-Ukraine. That same month, Hungary annexed the whole southern region of Carpatho-Ukraine including its main cities, Užhorod and Mukačevo. Then, on March 15, 1939, when Hitler destroyed what remained of Czechoslovakia, Carpatho-Ukraine declared its independence, but was immediately annexed by Hungary. For the rest of the war,

Subcarpathian Rus' (Carpatho-Ukraine) remained under Hungarian rule, while Carpatho-Rusyns in the Prešov Region remained in what became an independent Slovak state closely allied to Nazi Germany.

Meanwhile, north of the mountains, the Lemko Rusyns found themselves under Nazi German rule after Poland was destroyed in September 1939 and the Lemko Region was annexed to Hitler's Third Reich. Finally, in the wake of the German-led invasion of Yugoslavia in the spring of 1941, the Vojvodina with its Carpatho-Rusyn inhabitants was annexed to Hungary. Thus, during World War II, Carpatho-Rusyn lands were ruled by either Nazi Germany or its allies, Hungary and Slovakia.

For most of the war years, the Carpatho-Rusyn homeland did not suffer any military damage and the economic situation was relatively good. This did not mean, however, that certain segments of the population were exempt from the suffering caused by the new political conditions. In 1939-1940, nearly 40,000 mostly young Carpatho-Rusyn males who were opposed to Hungary's annexation of Subcarpathian Rus' fled across the mountains into eastern Galicia, the former Polish region that after September 1939 was annexed to the Soviet Union. The young refugees, who expected to be welcomed to join in the fight against fascism, were instead arrested, accused of crossing into Soviet territory illegally, and sent to concentration camps. Three years later, those who survived were allowed to join the new Czechoslovak Army Corps set up to fight alongside the Soviet Army against Hitler.



Msgr. Avhustyn Vološyn, the leading Carpatho-Rusyn grammarian and pedagogue and later head of the Ukrainian orientation in interwar Subcarpathian Rus'.

At home in Subcarpathian Rus', which was renamed Carpathia (*Kárpátalja*) by the Hungarians, Carpatho-Rusyns had a modicum of cultural freedom. The "Uho-Rusyn" language was taught in schools, and Rusyn publications and cultural societies were permitted as long as they were pro-Hungarian. Expressions of pro-Ukrainian sentiment were forbidden, however. The war years were particularly harsh toward the over 100,000 Jews, who alone made up nearly one-quarter of the population in Subcarpathian Rus'. In the spring of 1944, the Hungarian authorities under pressure from Germany deported virtually all of Subcarpathia's Jewish inhabitants to the Nazi death camps where they perished. As a result, the Jewish presence, which for several centuries had been an integral part of the Carpatho-Rusyn environment, ceased to exist.

In the fall of 1944, the German army, together with its Hungarian and Slovak allies, was driven from all parts of Carpathian Rus' by the Soviet Army. Among the victorious Soviet forces was the Czechoslovak Corps with its large contingent of Rusyn soldiers. During the course of the war, the Allied Powers (United States, Great Britain, France, the Soviet Union) had agreed that Subcarpathian Rus' should again be part of a restored Czechoslovak state. In October 1944, however, the Soviet Generalissimo Stalin suddenly changed his mind. With the help of local Communists, the Soviets prepared the ground for the annexation of Subcarpathian Rus' to what was described as the "Soviet Ukrainian motherland." No general plebiscite was ever held, and in June 1945 a provisional Czechoslovak parliament (with no Carpatho-Rusyn representation) ceded Subcarpathian Rus' to the Soviet Union. As for other Carpatho-Rusyn territory, the Prešov Region remained within Czechoslovakia; the Lemko Region became part of a restored Poland; and the Vojvodina became part of the Serbian Republic within a federated Yugoslavia.

Within a few years after the end of World War II, all Carpatho-Rusyns found themselves under Communist rule, either in the Soviet Union or in countries under Soviet domination. The last of these countries to become Communist was Czechoslovakia. That took place in 1948, the same year Yugoslavia freed itself from the Soviet bloc, although it still remained Communist.

Communist rule had a particularly negative impact on traditional Carpatho-Rusyn life. During the first few years after World War II, the Greek Catholic church was outlawed; land was taken from the individual farmers who were obliged, often against their will, to work in collective or cooperative farms; and the Rusyn nationality was forbidden. Anyone who might claim his or her identity as Rusyn was against their will listed in official documents as a Ukrainian. The Rusyn language was banned in schools and all publications.

An even worse fate befell the nearly 180,000 Lemko Rusyns living in Poland. About two-thirds were encouraged to emigrate voluntarily to the Soviet Ukraine in 1945 and 1946. Then, in the spring of 1947, those Lemkos who had remained in the Carpathians were driven from their homes by Polish security troops. They were forced to live in the former German lands of western and northern postwar Poland (in particular Silesia). As for the Lemko Region itself, many age-old Rusyn villages were destroyed, while others were taken over by Polish settlers.



Father Jevmenij Sabov, an important cultural activist of Russophile orientation in interwar Subcarpathian Rus'.

The only exception to the sad fate of Carpatho-Rusyns during the post-World War II Communist era was Yugoslavia. In the Vojvodina and neighboring Srem region, Rusyns were recognized as a distinct nationality with their own government-supported schools, publications, cultural organizations, radio, and television programs. The Greek Catholic church also was allowed to function in Yugoslavia. Finally, in 1974, when the Vojvodina became an autonomous province within the republic of Serbia, the Rusyns became one of the five official nationalities in the region.

Despite the harshness of Communist rule, the Carpatho-Rusyns did from time to time protest their fate. In Poland during the late 1950s, Lemkos began to return illegally to their native mountain villages, and by the 1980s about 10,000 did succeed in reestablishing new homesteads or in buying back their old houses. Some Lemkos also tried to set up their own cultural organizations and publications distinct from Ukrainians, but they were blocked in those efforts by the Polish government.

In neighboring Slovakia, Carpatho-Rusyns protested their reclassification as Ukrainians by identifying themselves as Slovaks and sending their children to Slovak schools. The result was large-scale assimilation among Carpatho-Rusyns in the Prešov Region whose numbers declined by two-thirds after a policy of forced Ukrainianization was implemented in 1952. During the Prague Spring of 1968,

when Czechoslovakia's leaders tried to "humanize" Communism, Carpatho-Rusyns in the Prešov Region demanded the return of their nationality as well as the re-establishment of Rusyn schools and publications. Those efforts were cut short, however, by the invasion of the country by the Soviet Union and its allies on August 21, 1968. Within a year of the invasion, the hard-line pro-Soviet Czechoslovak Communist authorities once again banned all activity that might in any way be connected with a distinct Carpatho-Rusyn identity. Only the Greek Catholic church, which was restored in Czechoslovakia in June 1968, was allowed to survive, although it rapidly dropped its former Carpatho-Rusyn orientation and became an instrument of Slovakization. Thus, the four decades of Communist rule following World War II brought to an end many aspects of traditional Carpatho-Rusyn life and led to the virtual disappearance of the group as a distinct nationality.

Carpatho-Rusyns, like every other people in central and eastern Europe, were profoundly influenced by the reforms that began in the Soviet Union after the accession to power in 1985 of Mikhail Gorbachev as head of the Soviet Communist party. The first changes actually took place among the Lemko Rusyns in Poland, who as early as 1983 organized an annual folk and cultural festival (Vatra). The goal of the Vatra was to restore among Lemkos the idea that they belonged to a distinct nationality that was neither Ukrainian or Polish, but Carpatho-Rusyn.

A Carpatho-Rusyn national revival really got underway only after the fall of Communism in 1989. During the next two years, a new organization to promote the idea of a distinct Carpatho-Rusyn nationality was established in each of the countries where Rusyns live: the Society of Carpatho-Rusyns in Ukraine, the Rusyn Renaissance Society in Slovakia, and the Lemko Association in Poland. This same period saw as well the establishment of new organizations among Rusyns outside the Carpathian homeland, such as the Society of Friends of Subcarpathian Rus' in the Czech Republic, the Ruska Matka in Yugoslavia, and even the Organization of Rusyns in Hungary where it was thought Rusyns had long ago disappeared through assimilation already by the end of the nineteenth century. Also, for the first time since World War II, Rusyn-language newspapers and magazines began to appear, including *Rusyn* and *Narodný novynkŷ* in Slovakia, *Podkarpats'ka Rus'* in Ukraine, and *Besida* in Poland.

The greater ease of travel following the fall of Communism allowed Carpatho-Rusyns new opportunities for cross-country cooperation. As a result, in March 1991, the first World Congress of Rusyns and, in November 1992, the first Congress of the Rusyn Language were held, both in Slovakia. The cultural and organizational activities that have taken place since the Revolution of 1989 have in varying degrees been assisted by the governments of all the countries where Rusyns live, except Ukraine. In March 1991, Rusyns were even recognized and recorded as a distinct nationality in the census of the former Czech and Slovak Federated Republic.

In the wake of the Revolution of 1989, the vast majority of Carpatho-Rusyns in Europe found themselves living in new countries. In the summer of 1991, the Rusyns of Yugoslavia became divided by a new state boundary between a

smaller Yugoslavia (that still included the Vojvodina) and a newly independent Croatia. Unfortunately, the Carpatho-Rusyns of Croatia (about 2,500 in the area near Vukovar) were in the war zone between Croatia and Serbia and suffered much material losses and forced deportation as part of Serbia's policy of ethnic cleansing. At the end of 1991, when the Soviet Union collapsed, the Carpatho-Rusyns in Transcarpathia voted overwhelmingly in favor of an independent Ukraine. Finally, in January 1993, the Czechoslovak state broke up, so that the Prešov Region Rusyns now live in an independent Slovakia.

Today, the governments of Slovakia, Poland, the Czech Republic, Hungary, and Yugoslavia recognize Carpatho-Rusyns as a national minority. Rusyn organizations in each country are concerned primarily with preserving the group's existence as a distinct nationality through cultural activity, such as publications and the work of scholarly institutions, schools, and theaters. In Ukraine's Transcarpathia, however, the emphasis has been on political activity, in particular efforts to obtain autonomy.

In December 1991, at the same time that the citizens of Ukraine voted in a referendum for their independence, 78 percent of the inhabitants of Transcarpathia voted in favor of autonomy (self-rule) for their province. To date, neither the Ukrainian government nor parliament has implemented the promised autonomy voted on by over three-fourths of the population in a legal vote. In an attempt to put pressure on Ukraine to fulfill the results of the December 1991 referendum, a "Provisional government of the Republic of Subcarpathian Rus'" was formed in Užhorod in May 1993, headed by Professor Ivan Turjanycja. In June 1994, Turjanycja was also elected a deputy to the regional parliament (Narodna Rada), and it seems that the struggle to achieve autonomy for Subcarpathian Rus' (Transcarpathia) in Ukraine will henceforth be carried out within the framework of the regional parliament.

The Carpatho-Rusyn revival that began in the 1980s has not been greeted with universal favor. Those individuals in each country who accept a Ukrainian self-identity and who head pro-Ukrainian organizations reject all efforts by Carpatho-Rusyns to assert their national identity. Local Ukrainian leaders state categorically that "there cannot and should not" be a distinct Carpatho-Rusyn nationality. This is because the pro-Ukrainians believe that all Rusyns are simply a regional variant or "branch" of the Ukrainian nationality. Such views are particularly widespread in Ukraine, the only country that refuses to recognize Carpatho-Rusyns as a distinct people.

Despite such denials as expressed by the Ukrainian government and by nationalistic elements within the Ukrainian population, the idea of a distinct Carpatho-Rusyn nationality and culture continues to be greeted favorably, both in neighboring countries where the group lives as a minority (Slovakia, Poland, Hungary, Yugoslavia) as well as by several non-governmental organizations based in other countries who are concerned with fate of minority cultures and languages in Europe.

Paul Robert Magocsi
Toronto, Ontario

THE WORLD CONGRESS OF RUSYNS: AN INTERVIEW WITH THE CHAIRMAN

March 1996 marked the fifth anniversary since the First World Congress of Rusyns was held in Medzilaborce, Slovakia. On that occasion the founding chairman of the World Congress, Vasyľ Turok, was interviewed by Dr. Anna Plišková, associate editor of the Rusyn-language newspaper, Narodný novynký. The full interview first appeared in the magazine Rusyn, IV, 1-2 (Prešov, 1996), pp. 2-3.—Editor

PLIŠKOVA: There is no question that the World Congress of Rusyns has made concrete steps toward achieving recognition for Rusyns as a distinct nationality, especially in Europe, but also in the United States and elsewhere throughout the world. How do you as chairman of the executive council of the World Congress assess the organization after five years of activity? In other words, what has been its development from one congress to the next?

TUROK: Those people who thought the World Congress of Rusyns would be some kind of political party were surprised. In fact, from the First to the Third Congress we have only wished that Rusyns, wherever they live, become aware that they form a compact entity about which they for a long time have been unaware, that they have a sense of unity, that we are aware of what each other is doing regardless in what country we live, and that we cooperate in common ventures. To be sure, it has not been possible to undertake any major activity, because as an organization we have not had and still do not have our own financial resources. In other words, from the beginning we have been without any funds.

It is only individual organizations who are members of the World Congress that have funds. Thanks to them it has been possible for members of the executive council to meet twice each year to plan for cultural events and to organize every two years a meeting of the entire World Congress of Rusyns. Last year the Third Congress took place in Ruski Kerestur in Yugoslavia.

Each congress has had a specific character. The First World Congress of Rusyns in Medzilaborce, Slovakia was a very emotional event. This is completely understandable, since it was in part a result of the fact that until then Rusyns [in various countries] did not really know about each other. Suddenly they had the possibility to meet for the first time in free circumstances.

At the time [1991], for instance, we did not even know that in Hungary Rusyns still existed as a relatively compact group in certain places (Komlóská, Mucsony) and they maintained a sense of Rusyn national identity to such a degree that between the First and Third Congresses they created their own organization. It is headed by Gabor Hattinger. This Rusyn Organization in Hungary has been able to obtain funds from the Hungarian government and to organize cultural events in Komlóská, Mucsony, and Budapest. It has brought together Rusyn ensembles at folk festivals and it has published books and newspapers in Rusyn, prepared television programs, and most recently has ar-

anged for Rusyn to be taught in schools. And this has occurred in Hungary of all places!

Here I must say that from the very beginning of our work—and still now—the Rusyns of Hungary have turned out to be for us and for Europe the greatest surprise. No less a surprise during this fifth anniversary year of the World Congress is a further change in the Hungarian government's attitude toward its Rusyns that has taken on today a very positive character.

We are also very pleased that the improvement in the situation of Hungary's Rusyns between the First and Third Congresses has to a degree been matched by the Rusyns of Poland. Also, with the end of the war in Yugoslavia, the republic of Serbia has returned to the level of support that it had given to its Rusyn nationality before the conflict. Unfortunately, developments in Subcarpathian Rus' [in Ukraine] have not evolved at all, and we are especially unhappy with the present situation in Slovakia.

Hence, if one were to assess the national revival of Rusyns at home [in Slovakia] and abroad from the First to the Third Congress, I would have to say that with regard to support from the Slovak state and the resultant possibility for the dynamic development of Rusyn culture, we reached the end of a four-cycle [1990-1994] and that since then for a whole year [1995] we have stagnated. This, moreover, is not a good sign for the Rusyn movement, because it was precisely the Rusyns of Slovakia who had become the integrating force for all Rusyns in Europe. Nevertheless, I believe that by the time of the Fourth Congress in Budapest in 1997 the situation will change not only in Slovakia but also in Subcarpathian Rus'. This is essential, because if in these two regions nothing will change for the better among Rusyns, then everyone will begin to feel that the Rusyn revival is only a temporary phenomenon.

We have, however, been able to observe recently that even Kiev has slowly begun to alter its attitudes to the Rusyns in Ukraine. It certainly would be a good thing if by the time of the Fourth Congress the ice in Ukraine really melted so that the congress as a whole could concern itself fully with practical issues in the areas of education, the media, cultural activity, and language. I would also hope that the policy of the Slovak government toward its national minorities, including Rusyns, will finally become stable and clear and that the government will avoid the chaotic and confrontational tone that has dominated its policy [since Vladimír Mečiar came to power in 1995].

PLIŠKOVA: Looking at the five-year work of the World Congress as a whole, what do you consider its general achievements and what plans exist so that the executive council of the World Congress of Rusyns will be able to attain a degree of prestige not only among Rusyns but among society at large? And how can the work of the World Council attain a higher professional level?

TUROK: I consider as the mark of success those things I already mentioned. Namely, that Rusyns in various countries are in continual contact with each other, that they have positively influenced each other, and that the outside world has become aware of Rusyns in general and their organizations who are members of the World Congress of Rusyns. A very positive role in this regard is played by the magazine

Rusyn, which at the very First Congress was designated as the organ of the World Congress of Rusyns. *Rusyn* informs the world of the intentions, concrete plans, and activity of the entire Rusyn movement, whether in Europe, North America, or even Australia. I consider the appearance of *Rusyn* to be a major achievement of Rusyn organizations throughout the world.

No less important is the role that the World Congress of Rusyns has played in influencing a change in attitude among the governments of certain countries where Rusyns live. One example is Poland where we participate regularly in the cultural events of Poland's Lemkos and meet with that country's cultural and civic representatives to discuss issues related to Rusyns. As a result, Poland's support for its Lemkos has changed to such a degree that today it is at higher level than Slovakia's support for its Rusyns. We should also not forget that the First World Congress of Rusyns [1991] has had such an impact that the Polish government and parliament formally condemned the 1947 Vistula Action which deported Lemkos far from their homeland and that Poland has begun to undertake reparations for losses suffered by Lemkos.

Finally, the Third World Congress, at which we once again called upon all Rusyns to remain loyal to the states in which they live, made such a favorable impression on war-torn Yugoslavia and on the government of Serbia that the position of Rusyns in that country was strengthened. As an indication of the good relations that the government of Serbia maintains toward Rusyns, Prime Minister Mirko Marjanović acted as patron of the Third World Congress.

With regard to the second part of your question—the professional level of our activity and future perspectives—may I remind you that one cannot speak of such issues without touching on the problem of the financial resources of the World Congress. Since no state where Rusyns live provides funding for the work of international organizations, we are turning our attention to the Council of Europe. I believe it is only in this manner that the plans of the World Congress of Rusyns can be realized. Among these—and one that I consider very important—is a series of visits to the governments of each state where Rusyns live in order to inform them directly of the entire Rusyn problem and of our goals. If the Council of Europe supports this plan, then obviously we would inform it of the results of our visits. Should such visits be realized, I believe it would provide a great boost to the Rusyn national revival and cultural life in Europe, and that it would place the World Congress of Rusyns in a very positive light throughout the world.

OUR FRONT COVER

Memorial card issued by the Greek Catholic Eparchy of Mukačevo on the occasion of the 350th anniversary of the Union of Užhorod. The first line in Church Slavonic script reads: "May All be United. Thanks Be to God." The symbol in the middle includes images of the castle of Užhorod (where the union was reached) and St. Peter's Basilica at the Vatican.

UPDATE ON THE RUSYN LANGUAGE

Teaching the Rusyn language in schools has been a high priority of Rusyn cultural organizations since the Revolution of 1989 and the fall of Communism. The situation of Rusyns in Slovakia has shown the most promise, although as we have discussed in recent issues of the *Carpatho-Rusyn American* (Vol. XVIII, Nos. 3 and 4, 1995) the present Slovak government has been slow in implementing its commitment to provide Rusyn-language instruction in elementary schools.

The situation finally began to change in March 1996, when Slovakia's Ministry of Education distributed a questionnaire to parents inquiring whether they wished that "the Rusyn language and literature be taught as a subject two to three hours weekly." Within a month, 569 parents responded positively, and in early June a meeting of school inspectors in eastern Slovakia together with Ministry of Education officials announced that there are ten schools where a minimum of 6 to 8 pupils per class will be enrolled in Rusyn-language classes.

A special preparatory seminar for teachers will be conducted in August by Dr. Vasyl' Jabur, the author of Slovakia's new Rusyn grammar and an employee of the Ministry of Education who formulated the program in Rusyn language and literature. Beginning in September 1996, the ten elementary schools in which Rusyn will be taught in grades 1 through 4 are in the Humenné district (Medzilaborce—2, Snina, Zboj), the Svidník district (Havaj, Ladomirová, Svidník), the Stará L'ubovňa district (Čirč, Sárišske Jastrabie), and the Vranov district (Rus'ká Poruba).

Now that the Ministry of Education has a clear idea of its needs, it also plans to release for public distribution the various textbooks and dictionaries that have since early 1995 been held in storage. Some individuals who have heeded the suggestions made in the *Carpatho-Rusyn American* to write to Slovakia's Minister of Education have received the books directly from Bratislava.

Rusyn-language instruction in ten schools in eastern Slovakia is only a beginning. Other parents need to be encouraged to request more Rusyn classes, and the Ministry of Education needs to prepare a program for upper-level classes and, most importantly, establish a university Department (*Katedra*) of Rusyn Language and Culture in order to train teachers properly and prepare pedagogical and scholarly materials in a professional manner.

In Poland, the Rusyn language began to be taught in elementary schools as early as September 1991. Since that time the number of schools offering classes has been between 6 and 8 per year, with the number of students in each school fluctuating between 4 to 15. New textbooks of the Lemko-Rusyn language have been prepared for the first four elementary classes by Myroslava Chomjak.

In Hungary, the first Rusyn-language course to be taught in a school in that country since World War I was inaugurated in September 1995. The course is offered in the village of Mucsony just northwest of Miskolc in the eastern part of the country. At the outset there were no textbooks, but in January 1996 a representative of Hungary's Ministry

of Education purchased from the Slovak government several copies of the Rusyn *Bukvar* (Primer) and *Čítanka* (Reader) by Jan Hryb that were prepared for Rusyns in Slovakia but were not yet being used in that country. The Organization of Rusyns in Hungary is pressing for Rusyn to be taught in other elementary schools, most particularly in Komlóška.

The best situation for Rusyn-language instruction remains Yugoslavia, where in the Vojvodina region it has been taught in several schools since 1945. The most important of these is Ruski Kerestur which has its own elementary school, *gymnasium* (high school), and teacher's college where all courses are taught in Vojvodinian Rusyn. Despite the recent war, the international embargo, and the sometimes extremist anti-minority statements by Serbian nationalists, the Yugoslav government continues its full support for the Rusyn school system.

It is only in Ukraine, where the vast majority of Rusyns live, that there is no instruction in any school in the Rusyn language. A new grammar of the Subcarpathian variant of the Rusyn language was recently completed by Ihor Kerča and Stepan Popovyč (*Materyn'skŷj jazŷk: pysemnycja pro pudkarpats'kych Rusyniuv*, 1995).

There is little likelihood, however, that the Rusyn language will be taught anywhere in Transcarpathia in the near future, because local pro-Ukrainian activists together with government officials and advisors in Kiev continue to argue that Rusyn is not a language and that demands for teaching and publishing in that the so-called "non-existent language" are part of an international conspiracy to undermine the Ukrainian state and nationality.

Paul Robert Magocsi
Toronto, Ontario

ACADEMICIAN TOLSTOJ ABOUT THE RUSYN LANGUAGE

One year has passed since the formal declaration of the codification of the Rusyn language in Slovakia. Since that time the world of Slavic scholarship has looked with great favor on the Rusyn language revival.

Already twelve journals have carried articles about what is described as a "new Slavic language for a distinct Slavic people." Positive reports about the January 1995 Rusyn language codification in Slovakia have appeared in journals published in Austria (*Europa Ethnica*, *Österreichische Osthefte*), France (*Revue des études slaves*), Germany (*Jahrbücher für Geschichte Osteuropas*, *International Journal of the Sociology of Language*), Great Britain (*Slavonica*, *Slavonic and East European Review*), Slovakia (*Slavica Slovaca*), and the United States (*ASN Analysis of Current Events*, *Austrian Studies Newsletter*, *East European Politics and Societies*, *Slovak Studies Association Newsletter*).

One of the world's most distinguished Slavists, Professor Nikita I. Tolstoj of the Russian Academy of Sciences in Moscow, has also commented on the Rusyn language in Slovakia. According to Academician Tolstoj: "the idea for such a literary language is not a fantasy or the imaginary creation of a few isolated individuals or groups. Rather, it clearly shows the natural desire of people to have a language that is widely functional and usable in all walks of life."

Tolstoj's remarks are part of an introduction he wrote for a book entitled, *A New Slavic Language is Born: The Rusyn Literary Language of Slovakia*, which contains the scholarly papers delivered at the codification event by Professors Aleksander Duličenko, Paul Robert Magocsi, and Vasyľ Jabur. This new book (in a bilingual Slovak and English edition) will be available from the Carpatho-Rusyn Research Center in May 1996.

CODIFICATION OF THE LEMKO VARIANT OF RUSYN

Codification of the Prešov Region variant of the Rusyn language, officially announced in January 1995 in Bratislava, Slovakia, was greeted by the international Rusyn community and national minority organizations throughout Europe (see **A NEW SLAVIC LANGUAGE IS BORN**, C-RA, Vol. XVIII, No. 1, 1995, pp. 4-8). At the present time, attempts are being made to codify the Lemko variant of Rusyn. Initial work has focused on the creation of children's school texts, anthologies, and dictionaries. Such projects strengthen and standardize the building blocks of a language—its grammar, vocabulary, spelling—and serve to spread the knowledge of and acceptance of the codification efforts among the general population in whose hands the fate of a language ultimately resides.

In early 1995, the Lemko-Rusyn poet Petro Trochanovskij published an anthology of poetry for children, *Mamko, kup mi knižku* (Mom, Buy Me A Book). The anthology, including poetry from all Carpatho-Rusyn regions of Europe, was published by the Lemko Association (Stovaryšnja Lemkiv) with funds from the Polish Ministry of Culture and Art.

Myroslava Chomjak, a Lemko language teacher and author of several children's grammar texts and readers, likewise has had the second part of her colorfully-illustrated 70-page children's primer, *Včyme i bavime sja* (Let's Learn and Play), published by the Lemko Association. Chomjak is also currently at work on an interregional dictionary of the Rusyn language, which provides all the dialectical variants of words in a given Carpatho-Rusyn region and then contrasts them with the dialectical variants of the same word from other Carpatho-Rusyn regions. Chomjak expects to have a completed first draft of the dictionary ready for peer review at the Fourth World Congress of Rusyns, to be held in Budapest, Hungary in May 1997.

SINCE THE REVOLUTION OF 1989

Kiev, Ukraine. On March 4-6, 1996 a delegation of Slovak parliamentary deputies led by Dušan Slobodník, chairman of the parliamentary committee on foreign affairs, participated in a three-day meeting with the government and parliament of Ukraine. The question of the expansion of NATO eastward was the main item on the original agenda, but it turned out that the Ukrainian side was concerned primarily with discussing the "problem of Rusyns and Ukrainians," which according to a March 5 Radio Free Europe report "has created tension in the relations between the two states." Upon the return of the parliamentary delegation to Bratislava, several Slovak newspapers interviewed the participants and reported that "the Slovak deputies were surprised at how alive the question of the Rusyn national minority is in Kiev's official circles." (*Pravda*, March 8, 1996).

The delegation's leader, Dušan Slobodník, summed up the present official view of Slovakia: "With regard to Rusynism, I can say with complete confidence as former Minister of Culture that our government never wished to divide the unified structure of Ukrainians in Slovakia and to support Rusynism. Nevertheless, our constitution does not deny anyone the right to belong to the nationality of his/her choice. In the 1991 census, 17,000 persons responded that they are of Rusyn nationality. [Nearly 50,000 also responded that their native language was Rusyn—*editor*]. This development was to a certain degree the result of progandistic activity on the part of the Rusyn movement but not the Slovak government." (*Nove žytтя*, March 15, 1996, p. 1).

Ladomirová, Slovakia. "The Rusyns, a small central European people with a thousand-year-old history, have experienced a harsh historic fate similar to the Tibetans, Kurds, and Palestinians." These words are the clarion call of a public statement known as the Charta Ruthenium 2000 (The Rusyn Charter for the Year 2000), issued on March 20, 1996 by Michal Kost', the mayor of the village of Ladomirová and a Rusyn activist in the Svidník district of eastern Slovakia.

The Rusyn Charter 2000 laments the fact that during the first four years after the Revolution of 1989 the Rusyns were treated well in Slovakia, but that since 1995, under Prime Minister Mečiár, "the words and deeds of the state's administration are diametrically opposed. Slovakia's signature and ratification of international agreements for the protection of national minorities and the reality that we face today are an example of the cynical, even arrogant attitude of government officials." In order to correct this situation, "the goal of the Rusyn Charter 2000 is to form a political party based on the ethnic principle, that is one whose goal is to elect parliament candidates of Rusyn background who will defend the economic, social, and ecological interests and needs of Rusyns in Slovakia." The Rusyn Charter 2000 has provoked widespread interest in Rusyn circles in Slovakia and calls upon Rusyns worldwide to assist it in achieving its political goals.

Budapest, Hungary. On March 21, 1996, Hungary's Foundation for National and Ethnic Minorities allotted 3.5 million forints (\$44,000) from state funds as part of the 1996

budget for *Rusynskýj žývot* (Rusyn Life), the official organ of the organization of Rusyns in Hungary. As a result of such funding, *Rusynskýj žývot*, which has been published irregularly since 1994, now appears as a bi-weekly small format newspaper in the Rusyn and Hungarian languages, edited by Judita Kiššova and under the direction of Gabor Hattinger. Subscriptions are available by writing to: Rusyns'kyj žývot, ORRUMA, Nagymező u. 49. fszt. 4, 1065 Budapest, Hungary.

Prague, Czech Republic. In March 1996, a Greek Catholic Exarchate was created for the Czech Republic. Greek Catholics in that country (which includes the historic lands of Bohemia, Moravia, and southern Silesia) had previously been under the jurisdiction of the Eparchy of Prešov, now in independent Slovakia. The new Exarchate of Prague is headed by Bishop Ivan Ljavinec, a native of Subcarpathian Rus' who since World War II has lived in what was former western Czechoslovakia. The main church of the exarchate is St. Clement's in the heart of Prague near the Charles Bridge. The exarchate publishes irregularly a bulletin in Czech and in Ukrainian, *Jedynym sercem*, available from the Biskupský exarchat, Haštalské nám. 4, Praha, Czech Republic.

Užhorod, Ukraine. On April 21, 1996, an estimated five to eight thousand people came to Užhorod to celebrate the 350th anniversary of the Union of Užhorod. The Greek Catholic faithful and well-wishers came from the Transcarpathian region and other parts of Ukraine, from neighboring Slovakia, Hungary, Romania, the Czech Republic, and Yugoslavia, as well as a delegation of 200 people from the United States.

It was on April 24, 1646, that 63 Orthodox priests from the Subcarpathian region professed their allegiance to the pope in Rome. This move resulted in the creation of the Uniate church, which in the 1770s was renamed the Greek Catholic church and which later, in the United States, came to be known as the Byzantine Ruthenian Catholic church.

The massive celebration was led by hierarchs and priests of all the Greek/Byzantine Ruthenian Catholic eparchies that trace their origins (in terms of territory or ancestral heritage) to the Eparchy of Mukačevo. This includes the eparchies of Prešov in Slovakia; Hajdúdorog in Hungary; Križevci in Croatia (and former Yugoslavia); Prague in the Czech Republic; Pittsburgh, Passaic, Parma, and Van Nuys in the United States; and Toronto in Canada. Among the officiating visitors were the papal nuncio to Ukraine (Archbishop Antonio Franco), the secretary of the Vatican's Congregation for Oriental Churches (Archbishop Myroslav Marusyn), and several bishops from the Ukrainian/Greek Catholic Archeparchy of L'viv. Although the Eparchy of Mukačevo is presently within the borders of Ukraine, it is not part of the Archeparchy of L'viv, but retains a special status (*ecclesia sui juris*) directly under the jurisdiction of the Vatican. This situation has been criticized on several occasions during the past few years by Ukrainian/Greek Catholic church leaders and by Ukrainian nationalists in Ukraine and abroad.

Pope John Paul II has nevertheless defended the distinct jurisdictional status of the Eparchy of Mukačevo, and in preparation for the 350th anniversary celebrations he published an open letter to Bishop Ivan Semedij of Mukačevo,

praising the Rusyns of Subcarpathia for their intention to celebrate the Union of Užhorod separate from the celebrations later this year by the Archeparchy of L'viv, which will mark the 400th anniversary of the Union of Brest that formed what is today called the Ukrainian (Greek) Catholic church. Hence, the success of the 350th anniversary celebrations in Užhorod was a further confirmation of the distinctiveness of the Carpatho-Rusyn people and their Eastern-rite Christian traditions.

The closing homily at the commemorative Divine Liturgy was delivered in English (with a translation into Rusyn) by the Archbishop of Pittsburgh, Judson Procyk. In keeping with the spirit of the pope's greetings read during the celebration, Archbishop Procyk stressed the ecumenical role of the Greek (Byzantine Ruthenian) Catholic church. In the measured tones of a realist, he summed up the historic place of his church in the ecumenical process: "We may not be the bridge that was intended, but we may be the beam to show the way."

Following the Divine Liturgy, the visiting hierarchs and priests visited the new Greek Catholic Seminary in Užhorod, funded largely by the Byzantine Ruthenian faithful in the United States. The impressive, well-built, and excellently maintained seminary is still under construction, although the living and dining quarters, classrooms, and beautiful chapel have already been completed and are in use.

The celebratory day ended with an evening concert of religious and folk music at the Transcarpathian Regional Theater. Among the performers were the Choir of the Greek Catholic Cathedral in Užhorod, the Choir of Greek Catholic Seminary of the Eparchy of Prešov, the chamber ensemble of the Transcarpathian Philharmonic Orchestra, and the Transcarpathian Folk Ensemble.



The new Greek Catholic Seminary in Užhorod. The wing on the right where the chapel is located has been completed since the time of this photograph.

RECENT EVENTS

Užhorod, Ukraine. On April 22, 1996, an international scholarly conference entitled "The Union of Užhorod of 1646 and the Historical Fate of the Eparchy of Mukačevo," was held in Užhorod under the sponsorship of the Greek Catholic Eparchy of Mukačevo. The opening session was chaired by Bishop Ivan Semedij, and in the presence of Vatican officials and other hierarchs the following papers were read: "The Theological and Non-Theological Motivations Behind the Union Movement in Užhorod and Transylvania," by Professor Ernst Süttner (Vienna, Austria); "From Brest to Užhorod," by Dr. Atanasij Pekar (Rome, Italy); "Assimilation or Adaptation: The Genius of the Greek Catholic Eparchy of Mukačevo," by Professor Paul Robert Magocsi (Toronto, Canada); and "The Union of Užhorod and the Slovaks," by Dr. Ľudovít Haraksim (Bratislava, Slovakia).

Other speakers included Dr. István Pirigy (Debrecen, Hungary); Dr. Vasyľ Nimčuk (Kiev, Ukraine); Dr. Oleh Turij (L'viv, Ukraine); Professor Jurij Sak (Užhorod, Ukraine); Father Ivan Tydir (Užhorod, Ukraine); Sandor Földvari (Debrecen, Hungary); Father Danijil Bendas (Vynohradovo, Ukraine); Dr. Ljudvik Filip (Užhorod, Ukraine); and Jurij Kossej (Užhorod, Ukraine).

Budapest, Hungary. On May 14, 1996, in the presence of representatives of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, Hungary's Office of National and Ethnic Minorities, its Ministry of Culture and Education, and the Organization of Rusyns in Hungary, a new Rusyn Scholarly Institute in Hungary (Naukovyj inštitut Rusyniv u Madjarsku) was created. The new body is headed by Dr. Tibor M. Popovič, a native of Subcarpathian Rus'. Dr. Popovič is a specialist in geography who for several decades has been a professor at the Technical University in Budapest. The new Rusyn Scholarly Institute in Hungary has four sections: language, headed by Professor István Udvari; social sciences, headed by Dr. Tibor Popovič; traditional architecture, headed by Mychal Tomčanyj; and music and art, headed by Šandor Barta.

The first goal of the institute is to prepare the program for the Fourth World Congress of Rusyns (to be held in Budapest in the spring of 1997). Among its specific projects are a bibliography of Rusyn studies, a Rusyn historical atlas, planning for a tourist center in Komlóska (a Rusyn village in northeastern Hungary), and the codification of the Rusyn language in Hungary.

A Forum on Carpatho-Rusyn Heritage

THE CARPATHO-RUSYN AMERICAN

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General inquiries concerning the Carpatho-Rusyn Research Center, and all communications concerning this publication, should be directed to:

Carpatho-Rusyn American
P.O. Box 192
Fairfax, VA 22030-0192
Phone: 703-691-8585
Fax: 703-691-0513

Patricia A. Krafcik, Editor
Jack Figel, Business Manager

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A Forum on Carpatho-Rusyn Cultural Heritage



Rusyn Parent: "We want our children to study our language in school."
Slovak Official: "Don't worry, I can guarantee that your children will study in our language"—that is, in Slovak.

PROMISES, PROMISES! CHAOS OR DECEPTION IN SLOVAKIA?

Toward the end of August, I was part of a delegation from several of Europe's national minorities that met with two officials at Slovakia's Ministry of Culture in Bratislava. Both officials were courteous but also rather insistent to convince our visiting delegation that present-day Slovakia has an excellent record with regard to its national minorities. In the course of the discussion that focused on the status of Magyars (Hungarians) and Rusyns in Slovakia, one of the ministry officials proclaimed that his new state treated national minorities "better than any other country," and that "the world should thank Slovakia for being such a model of tolerance."

Two days later, our delegation was in Prešov for an international conference on Europe's national minorities. Aside from discussing the present and future of Europe's stateless peoples, we all had an opportunity to learn first hand about Slovakia's supposedly exemplary policy toward at least one of its national minorities, the Rusyns. It quickly became clear that there was a large gap between the verbal claims of the government official in Bratislava and the reality, so to speak, on the ground.

We learned that in the course of 1996, the formerly vibrant publishing house of the Rusyn Renaissance Society (Rusyn'ska Obroda) had become virtually devastated. Just a few years ago, government support for the only Rusyn-language publisher in the country amounted to 2 million crowns in 1993, and 1.9 million crowns in 1994. Under the new government of Vladimír Mečiar, however, the subsidy was initially cut more than half to 970,000 crowns in 1995 and then to a mere 380,000 crowns in 1996. The result? No salaries for the five-member staff of the publishing house, who for over a year have been working as unpaid volunteers and who as of September 1996 are no longer eligible for unemployment benefits. Rusyn books cannot be published; the magazine *Rusyn* is unable to appear; and the weekly newspaper *Narodný novynký*, which was reduced to appearing only every second week since January 1996, appears now at best only once a month.

There did seem to be one bright spot, however. The Rusyn language, which was codified in January 1995, was in September of that year to be taught in about 8 to 10 schools. This did not happen because the language had not yet gotten formal approval from Slovakia's Ministry of Education. Therefore, in the course of the 1995/1996 school year, the appropriate study plans were drawn up; a questionnaire was submitted to parents, nearly 600 of whom requested their children be taught in Rusyn; and the ministry approved a week-long training seminar in late August to prepare teachers slated to teach in Rusyn beginning in September 1996.

Suddenly, two days before the seminar was to begin, and as teachers were on their way to Prešov to attend the training program, the Ministry of Education cancelled the seminar, stating that the ministry had not yet approved Rusyn-language instruction at one of its formal monthly hearings (*gremiálna porada*). Rusyn cultural activists in Slovakia, many of whom were in Prešov for the national minority conference, were devastated by the news that once again government promises were broken and that Rusyn would not be taught in schools.

Then, in a strange twist that seemingly only bureaucrats can explain, on August 28, the Ministry of Education's monthly hearing officially approved the program to teach Rusyn. Of course, the August 28 decision came after the teacher's training seminar was abruptly cancelled and, therefore, much too late for a school year that was about to begin in a few days time.

Are these the acts of a serious government? Is the problem perhaps the result of the general disorder that has accompanied the establishment of all new countries in the region? And has the disorder been compounded by the fact that Slovakia, which has been independent only since January 1993, does not yet have a sufficient number of trained and experienced non-Communist bureaucrats and governmental officials? Or, on the other hand, are these acts part of a deliberate policy to deceive the Rusyn population and to reverse the achievements made in the course of the Rusyn national revival since 1989? And why would the Slovak government want to do this? Perhaps it is pressure from neighboring Ukraine, frequently initiated by local pro-Ukrainians within Slovakia, that causes the Slovak government to have second thoughts about supporting Rusyn cultural distinctiveness for fear of alienating their powerful neighbor to the east?

Whatever the real reason may be, Rusyns in Slovakia and observers abroad are tired of speculating about the motivations of governmental circles in Slovakia. Rusyns simply want the minimal cultural rights that they deserve not as some kind of gift from the government, but as a right due to them as loyal tax-paying citizens of Slovakia.

Unfortunately, the cultural achievements of Slovakia's Rusyns since 1989 have been slowed down because of the drastic decline in financial support by the Slovak government after 1995. And while it is true that grants to the cultural programs of all minorities have been reduced, the Rusyns had less to begin with and so have even less now. In contrast to other national minorities in Slovakia, such as the Magyars, Roma (Gypsies), Ukrainians, and Germans, the Rusyns do not have their own schools (nor Rusyn classes in Slovak-language schools), they do not have their own radio station, and they do not have their own university department (*katedra*) to train teachers and to promote scholarship about their history and culture. Even what they did have for a few years—a flourishing publishing house—has been financially crippled. On the positive side, Rusyn individuals and businesses owned by Rusyns have begun to contribute money to their struggling newspaper and publishing house, although their relatively generous donations (exceptional for a former Communist environment) are insufficient to allow this one aspect of Rusyn cultural activity to survive.

Rusyns have always been loyal to Slovakia. They do not deserve the treatment they are receiving from the present government of Slovakia. Regardless whether the cause is bureaucratic chaos or calculated deception, unbroken promises are unbroken promises. The Ministry of Culture official who wanted the world to recognize Slovakia will probably get his wish. The recognition, however, will not be for tolerance, but rather for intolerance toward one of its national minorities—the Rusyns.

Paul Robert Magocsi
Toronto, Ontario

VOLODYMYR FEDYNYŠNEC'

Ever since the outbreak of the French Revolution in 1789, the idea of nationalism became a mass phenomenon and spread to many other lands during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Its success has in large part depended on the patriotic enthusiasm of individual native sons and daughters. This was particularly the case during the early phase of the phenomenon, known as the national revival, when poets, historians, linguists, and folklorists began to collect, publish, and promote the cultural heritage of their respective peoples.

Such heritage-gathering work also had another purpose, for almost without exception national activists needed to convince the larger society as well as their own people of the value of the culture they were attempting to preserve. For instance, as surprising as it may seem, the leaders of the German national revival in the early nineteenth century initially worked hard to convince fellow Germans that the German language, literature, and culture were at least as "good" as the French.

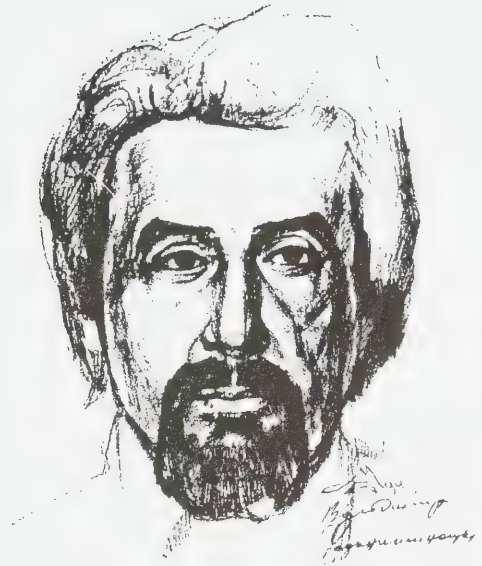
The Rusyn national revival has followed the pattern of other national revivals in Europe. The present revival began more or less during the revolutionary year of 1989 in all countries where Carpatho-Rusyns live: Ukraine, Slovakia, Poland, Hungary, and Yugoslavia. Each of those countries has its own Rusyn cultural and patriotic enthusiasts, and in Ukraine among the first and still most active is Volodymyr Fedynyšynec'.

Volodymyr Fedynyšynec' was born in 1943 in the Carpatho-Rusyn village of Repynne, in northcentral Subcarpathian Rus', present-day Transcarpathia in Ukraine. Both his parents were small-scale peasant farmers. Although Subcarpathian Rus' was annexed to Hungary at the time of his birth, the young Volodymyr was educated and spent most of his adult life under the new Soviet regime that was established in his homeland in 1945. Soviet rule brought with it positive as well as negative features. Among the positive aspects was an educational system open to many more young people than was ever before possible in Subcarpathian Rus'.

After completing his elementary education in Repynne, Fedynyšynec' attended the pedagogical institute in Mukačevo (1961), then graduated from Užhorod State University (1966), where he specialized in Ukrainian language and literature. While at the university he was particularly enamoured with the dialects of Subcarpathian Rus' and studied with the leading postwar specialist on the subject, Professor Josyp Dzendzeliv's'kyj. His other love was Rusyn ethnography, an interest he was able to pursue systematically as a senior researcher at the outdoor museum (*skanzen*) of Transcarpathian Traditional Life and Architecture in Užhorod, where he worked during the 1980s.

It was as a writer, however, that Fedynyšynec' was to become best known. Poetry, short stories, tales for children, translations, journalistic essays, original studies in literature, folklore, and history were the many genres he used to express his ideas and emotions. From his first collection of poetry in 1967 until the mid-1980s, he published nearly a dozen original literary works and became a member of the Writers Union of the Soviet Union (1983).

Then came the Gorbachev era and the enormous changes throughout the Soviet Union. Until that time and for nearly four decades since World War II, Fedynyšynec' experienced the negative aspects of Soviet rule, growing up



(Drawing by Mychailo Belen')

in the totalitarian Communist environment of Soviet Transcarpathia in which the identity and traditional culture of his Rusyn people were suppressed. The new Soviet leader, Mikhail Gorbachev, called on all citizens to criticize openly the past and provide constructive ideas to improve the future. Fedynyšynec' welcomed wholeheartedly the new political reality and felt the time had finally come to reassert publicly his Rusyn identity.

In 1991, he published three seminal essays, "I am a Rusyn, My Son is a Rusyn"; "Our Peaceful Rusyn Way"; and "Be a Rusyn So That Rusyns Will Survive," which served as a clarion call to himself and others to return to their Rusyn roots. Although Fedynyšynec' continued to write in Ukrainian, he argued that Rusyns were not a branch of Ukrainians and that they should have their own literary language as the best means to express their unique culture. For nearly a year, he expressed these views as founding editor of *Podkarpats'ka Rus'* (1992), the newspaper of the Society of Carpatho-Rusyns, and then in numerous newspaper articles, and radio and television interviews whether in Ukraine or in neighboring Hungary, Slovakia, and the Czech Republic. His pen seemed to know no bounds, so that between 1989 and 1996 alone he published over twenty works in which Rusyn themes predominated, including literary or critical studies of the nineteenth-century national awakener Aleksander Duchnovyč (1994), the twentieth-century social bandit Il'ko Lypej (1993), and the contemporary scholarly activist Paul Robert Magocsi (1995).

Not surprisingly, the Rusyn message propagated by Fedynyšynec' is not welcome among many people, most especially those in his native Subcarpathian Rus' (Transcarpathia) who consider themselves Ukrainian. Nor is the present economic crisis in post-Communist Ukraine conducive to individuals whose profession is literature, the arts, or scholarship. But Volodymyr Fedynyšynec' prevails, because as a patriotic enthusiast he is driven by the belief that Carpatho-Rusyns are a distinct people with the rich heritage that is worthy to be shared now with all other peoples, and to be passed on to future generations.

Philip Michaels

DISCRIMINATION AGAINST RUSYNS? NEW RESPONSES

The first response is from the Vice-Chairman of the Government of Slovakia, Jozef Kalman, to the INQUIRY regarding national discrimination against Rusyns in Slovakia which was sent to several Slovak ministries, newspapers in Bratislava, and to other officials in the fall of 1995 and which was published in the Carpatho-Rusyn American, Vol. XVIII, No. 3, 1995. (See other responses published in the C-RA, Vol. XVIII, No. 4, 1995.) This is followed by two presentations delivered in August 1996 at the second congress of La Maison des Pays, an international organization for promoting the cultures of national minorities in Europe. Dr. Vasyl' Jabur, former head of the defunct Institute of Rusyn Language and Culture, is presently head of the Ministry of Education's office for instruction in minority languages in Prešov. Professor Myron Sysak is chairman of the Department of Russian Language and Literature at Šafárik University in Prešov.—Editor

From the Vice-Chairman of the Government of the Slovak Republic:

We have received your letter on behalf of six civic and religious associations of American Carpatho-Rusyns with an appeal to the Slovak government concerning the alleged ethnic discrimination of Rusyns in Slovakia.

We would like to assure you that the minority policy of the Slovak government is just and unprejudiced toward all citizens and members of ethnic minorities. The government annually allocates substantial financial resources for the support and development of minority cultures which is not a common practice even in developed democracies.

As for Rusyns in the Slovak Republic, there is no discrimination at all against them. The Constitution of the Slovak Republic guarantees their right to freely proclaim their ethnicity, to develop their own distinct culture, to disseminate and receive information, to educate their children in their mother tongue, and to assemble within their ethnic associations.

As you know, the process of ethnic self-realization is a complex one, and just as in America, there is no single term here for Rusyns. In Slovakia, the Rusyns who in practice consider themselves a single ethnic group use their own terms such as Rusyn, Rusyn-Ukrainian, Ukrainian, Carpatho-Russian, and Carpatho-Rusyn. Eventually, a common term for this ethnic group will be accepted, or perhaps the use of several terms will continue.

A similar situation exists in the use of the mother tongue as a means of instruction in schools. According to the most recent census, 50,000 people claimed Rusyn as their mother tongue, but of these 20,000 claimed Slovak nationality, 17,000 Rusyn nationality, and 14,000 Ukrainian nationality. Which language they choose for education depends on their own free choice.

Our investigation of your statement regarding the interest on behalf of ten schools to instruct pupils in the Rusyn

language revealed that this interest did not come from the children's parents. Rather, the schools and teachers were picked by regional clubs of the Rusyn Renaissance Society (Rusyn'ska Obroda). After the basic pedagogical documents are prepared, the Ministry of Education will examine the request for instruction in the Rusyn language through directors of school districts and elementary schools. This task also involves the use of textbooks and teaching materials published by the Ministry of Education. The distribution of only one publication, *Rusyns in Slovakia*, by Paul R. Magocsi, was forbidden, based on an evaluation done by Slovak historians.

As to your further allegation that the government abolished the Institute of Rusyn Language, we would like to point out that it could not be abolished because there were no documents concerning the institute's foundation issued by either the Ministry of Culture or the Ministry of Education. After requesting documents from the Rusyn Renaissance Society, we learned that it was not a question of the establishment of an institute, but rather the name given to cultural activity dating back to 1993 for which government financial aid was allocated. In 1994, this group chose a new name, the Research Institute for Regional Culture, not the Institute for Rusyn Language and Literature.

Transformation of a non-existent institute into a Department of Rusyn Language and Culture at the Pedagogical Faculty of Šafárik University in Prešov is not possible either theoretically or practically. Issues relating to the establishment of scholarly, pedagogical, economic, and informational departments or centers is, according to Paragraph 10 of the Universities Act No. 172/1990, solely in the hands of academic institutions and faculties which are independent of the government. Only academic experts can resolve such issues.

The request made to establish an independent Rusyn desk within the broadcasting structure of ethnic and minority programming of the Slovak Radio in Prešov is based on the fact that 41.4% of its programs are in Ukrainian and 52-60% in Rusyn. The introduction of an independent broadcasting desk is possible after the completion of the proper legislative procedures.

On the issue of financial aid for the Rusyn Renaissance Society, we would like to state that in 1995 all ethnic minorities received financing proportionate to the capacity of the state budget. Moreover, the Rusyn Renaissance Society used 470,000 crowns in unauthorized activities which the Ministry of Culture subsequently accepted in an effort to resolve the bad financial situation of the association.

With regard to your allegation that a governmental decree issued in 1952 proclaimed all Rusyns as Ukrainians and then banned the Rusyn nationality and language, we wish to inform you that the 1930 population census conducted in Slovakia and Subcarpathian Rus' recognized only two nationalities—Russian and Malo-Russian (Ukrainian). There was no mention of Rusyn nationality. The term Rusyn was accepted by Constitutional Act No. 144/68 concerning the situation of nationalities in the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic. In its list of nationalities living in Czechoslovakia, it included "Ukrainian (Rusyn)." Both terms were used simultaneously. Obviously, this indicates that even the pre-

vious government had accepted the will of the people on this issue.

Finally, we can say that the Slovak government through its various ministries provides all the necessary conditions for the development of ethnic minorities. In the process of the implementation and realization of minorities' needs, the government prefers systemically-reached expert solutions over chaos and anger.

Jozef Kalman
Bratislava, Slovakia
January 11, 1996

The Role of the Mother Tongue in the Preservation and Cultivation of a National Identity: The Case of the Rusyns of Eastern Slovakia

I should like to begin by paraphrasing a statement by the well-known Czech writer and thinker, Jan Neruda, which goes something like this: A people which has lost or does not have its own language loses its voice in the body of humanity and is fated to play only a "silent role" on the world scene, that is, the role of a servant. And he who wants to be only a servant separates himself from the ranks of his own people.

Questions of ethnicity and language are closely linked, even interdependent, and this is something which becomes especially apparent in times of national revival, or re-revival. Ethnocultural revivals always evolve directly from a literary language, and they cannot develop without the propagation of the language, that is, without the formation of the literary language as an integral component and living medium of national culture. During the national awakening of all the Slavic peoples, the creation or codification of a literary language has been at the center. As Aleksandr Duličenko has pointed out, a literary language is also the major factor in the case of micro-ethnic Slavic groups. The relatively large number of such groups attest to the fact that national consciousness is weakened or absent wherever a language is lacking. This means that it is no longer possible to anticipate the re-Slavicizing of former Slavs who have completely lost their Slavic mother tongue.

Hence, national revivals are possible only when spoken languages are still alive and when there are attempts to create a literary language on the basis of a local dialect or dialects.

With regard to the Rusyn mother tongue in Slovakia, I believe that the leadership of the Rusyn Renaissance Society [Rusyn'ska Obroda] understood correctly and just in the nick of time the threat facing the Rusyn language. The society also understood the need to link the revival of Rusyns in Slovakia and in other regions with the need to codify the literary Rusyn language, and it did everything possible so that intensive work on the codification could begin. The beginnings of this work extend back to November 1992, a project which Dr. Paul R. Magocsi discusses in detail in many scholarly articles.

Preparation for the codification of Rusyn moved quickly in the newly-established Institute of Rusyn Language, which in the short period of its existence—if I may boast a bit—accomplished a great deal. We were also pres-

sured to work by some threatening conditions imposed on us by the authorities, conditions which could be summed up in the following way: Because you do not have a codified literary language, you may not have a Rusyn-language radio broadcast; you may not open a department of Rusyn language and prepare future teachers; you may not publish school textbooks or begin instruction of Rusyn in the schools; you may not prepare teachers for elementary school; and much else.

No one in the relevant government ministries took into consideration that the codification should be prepared on a solid scholarly level. No one supported the proposal to create and maintain a genuine scholarly institution where even the minimal conditions could be provided for such work. In spite of all this the institute managed to function on financial support from the Rusyn Renaissance Society and assiduously prepared basic codification texts.

And then the festive moment arrived. On January 27, 1995 the ceremony announcing the codification of the Rusyn literary language in Slovakia was held in Bratislava. Once again, thanks to Dr. Magocsi the academic world was informed not only through scholarly journals, but also by means of an impressive publication which appeared in a bilingual English-Slovak edition under the title *A New Slavic Language is Born*. I myself am proud of the fact that the introduction to this publication was written by one of the most well-known Slavists today, Russian Academician Nikita Il'ič Tolstoj, from whom I quote: "The book convincingly reveals that the idea for [a Rusyn] literary language is not a fantasy or the imaginary creation of a few isolated individuals or groups. Rather, it clearly shows the natural desire of people that is not limited to a written and inert form, but which one that is widely functional and usable in all walks of life."

Unfortunately, the euphoria of the codification's ceremonial announcement was soon replaced by a harsh bitterness. The Rusyn Renaissance Society was severely punished for financially supporting the codification, and the Institute of Rusyn Language was liquidated and could not continue further work on normative texts. In spite of the fact that we have a codified literary language, none of the conditions mentioned above were subsequently fulfilled.

In order that the Rusyn language in Slovakia not disappear, we are placing a great deal of hope in its instruction in those elementary schools where parents show an interest. Here, it is essential to consider certain facts. In the 1991 census, 17,000 citizens of the Slovak Republic identified themselves as Rusyns and almost 50,000 stated that they consider Rusyn their mother tongue. In reality, the numbers in each category are actually much larger. As for concrete interest in the Rusyn language, a recent questionnaire solicited 563 parents from four regions who responded positively. The survey was conducted by Slovakia's Ministry of Education.

In Slovakia at the present time there is no language study for pupils in their Rusyn mother tongue. This is because Rusyn schools were forbidden after 1953, and not through any fault of their own. The majority of Rusyns eventually chose Slovak schools. Clearly, a return to the situation before 1953 is neither realistic nor practically possible. That is why we propose to accept all decisions by

parents who wish to send their children to schools where instruction is in Slovak for a given number of hours, and where the Rusyn language and literature instruction for their children could be offered for the same number of hours. The basic conditions for the realization of this step were fulfilled with the codification of the Rusyn language in January 1995 and with the publication of normative language handbooks, a primer, and a reader as the basic textbooks for mastering the Rusyn alphabet and shaping initial skills and habits of reading and writing in Rusyn.

How do we envision the future of the Rusyn language and culture? The Rusyn language will have a special place in Slovak schools because after several decades it will again be possible for children of Rusyn citizens in Slovakia to study their mother tongue in school. This will contribute not only to the preservation and development of national identity, particularly that of a minority culture, it will also allow for the preservation and development of the ancestral language. The education of a literate Rusyn-speaking individual in academic surroundings will gradually enable a broadening of the functions of the Rusyn language and the eventual expansion of the Rusyn-speaking environment in various spheres of social life.

All this will inspire a natural yearning to return to a situation in which use of the Rusyn mother tongue in ordinary, namely family, life would again become the norm. A longing to return to Rusyn family traditions will contribute to the revival of traditional Rusyn national culture, to the gradual enhancement of the Rusyn literary language, and to the creation of models for intelligent, cultural communication in an increasingly refined normative literary language. This will surely put an end to the gradual disappearance of the basic *source* for the literary language, in other words, the natural, living Rusyn dialects—the pure, noble, untainted living speech. Without the full-fledged living oral form of a language, literary language cannot develop. If the living, spoken language dies out, then neither the language nor the people have any future. It is precisely the revival of the teaching of Rusyn in schools which could prevent the disappearance of this irreplaceable cultural treasure.

Even though all preparations had been completed to begin instruction in Rusyn this academic year in elementary grades one and two, we learned just yesterday from Ministry of Education officials that our work again was for naught and that the study of Rusyn in our schools once again will not begin this September.

I must conclude on this sad note, while holding on to the hope that the future may bring good news.

Vasyl' Jabur
Kosiče, Slovakia
August 23, 1996

About the Need to Preserve the Rusyn Language and Culture

I would like to take this opportunity at the Second Congress of the European Federation of National Minorities to bring both national and international attention to the difficult situation in which the Rusyns of eastern Slovakia find themselves.

We are an ethnic group which, "by decree," was stripped of our national identity. According to a decision of perpetually unnamed Soviet organs after 1944, Subcarpathian Rus' was renamed Transcarpathian Ukraine, and Rusyns, who had lived there for centuries, were redesignated as Ukrainians. This decision directly affected us in Slovakia as well. They took from us not only our nationality, but also our Greek Catholic church—something which was inextricably linked to the Rusyn nationality. For forty years we were denationalized and spiritually reoriented. They tried to convince us that we were just a "small branch" of the great Ukrainian nationality which was largely Orthodox Christian. They told us that by becoming Ukrainians and Orthodox we would fulfill our historical destiny.

The results of such governmental policies were disastrous. Out of approximately 200,000 people who recognized themselves as Rusyn in 1946, we dwindled down to a handful of a few thousand. Forced ukrainianization has meant for us an almost complete denationalization and has hastened the slovakization of our people and the latinization of our church. As at the outset of the twentieth century, the situation seemed to be repeating itself. At that time, as a result of magyarizing forces, almost all Rusyns registered themselves as Hungarians, although obviously none of us were Hungarians. Today, most of our villages are registered as Slovak, although we are not Slovaks. While Slovaks accept this situation silently, it is not any credit to them, just as it was not any credit to the Hungarians at an earlier time.

Nor does it seem that this situation particularly disturbs ukrainianizers and today's so-called Greater Ukrainians (*vel'ko-ukrajinci*). I came to this conclusion after a television appearance by the Ukrainian ambassador to Slovakia, Dmytro Pavlyčko, in the spring of 1996. He was not concerned that an entire ethnic group had disappeared from a region. It only annoyed him that the few Rusyns who still remained did not consider themselves Ukrainians, because according to him Rusyns and Ukrainians are after all the same thing.

But we are not the same, Mr. Ambassador. If Ukrainians and Rusyns were the same, if Rusyn meant the same thing as Ukrainian, and Ukrainian the same thing as Rusyn, then what hinders Ukrainians from considering themselves only as Rusyns, from registering themselves only as Rusyns, from promoting only Rusyn language and culture? The catch is that those who insist that Rusyns and Ukrainians are the same also insist that Rusyn automatically means Ukrainian, but not vice versa.

As for the hybrid term *Rusyn-Ukrainian*, it is an anachronism just like *Serbo-Croat*, *Czecho-Slovak*, or *Anglo-American*. Ordinary people have mastered this simplistic arithmetic much better than Rusyn-Ukrainian demagogues and theoreticians. At the first free census [in 1991], people registered either as Ukrainians or Rusyns, but not one as a Rusyn-Ukrainian. And this was true even of the "Rusyn-Ukrainian" activists.

The forced ukrainianization and Orthodoxization of our people had yet another result: An equal number of individuals who formerly considered themselves Rusyns and Greek Catholics now call themselves Ukrainians and Orthodox. Thank God! Let everyone be what they want to be. But let

no one hinder another from being what he or she wants. We Rusyns have had enough bad experiences with intolerance.

Several representatives of the present government in Slovakia continue supporting the goals of the former Communist regime's nationality policy. Even though a more numerous group of citizens now consider themselves Rusyn (17,000) rather than Ukrainian (13,000), and even though nearly 50,000 people identify Rusyn as their mother tongue, subsidies for the Rusyn press and for cultural activities are disproportionately lower in comparison to subsidies for Ukrainian activity. And this is not the only problem. In response to a Rusyn demand to initiate radio broadcasting in the Rusyn language, the director of the state-run Slovak Radio, Mr. Tužinsky, sidestepped constitutional law on the national identity of Rusyns when he wrote the following: "in order to organize broadcasting in the language of a particular minority or ethnic group, it is necessary that the group be acknowledged by law, and this is a decision of the National Parliament of the Slovak Republic. In the case of the Rusyn nationality, such a decision is still being awaited."

How are we supposed to explain this? Once again, does someone think they have the right to permit us to be this, and not that? Or is this a demonstration of nationalistic displeasure? "What is this? Are Rusyns still here? There should have been an end to them a long time ago!"

One of Plato's heroes self-assuredly answered to the reproach that an individual such as he meant nothing amidst the masses of millions: "Without me, the people are incomplete!"

I appeal to us all to do everything possible to preserve the language and culture of such an insignificant minority as the Rusyns of eastern Slovakia, because without us the people are incomplete.

Myron Sysak
Prešov, Slovakia
August 23, 1996

FORTHCOMING EVENT

On May 30-June 1, 1997, the Fourth World Congress of Rusyns will be held in Budapest, Hungary. The congress is being hosted by the Organization of Rusyns in Hungary, headed by Gabriel Hattinger, and is being made possible by the generous support of the government of Hungary through its program of assistance to cultural organizations.

Aside from the Budapest-based Organization of Rusyns in Hungary, the Fourth Congress will consist of ten-member delegations from each organization that makes up the World Congress: the Carpatho-Rusyn Research Center, United States; the Lemko Association (Stovaryšnja Lemkiv), Poland; the Rusyn Cultural Foundation (Ruska Matka), Yugoslavia; the Rusyn Renaissance Society (Rusyn'ska Obroda), Slovakia; and the Society of Carpatho-Rusyns (Občestvo Karpatskych Rusynov), Ukraine.

The Fourth World Congress of Rusyns will be held in the elegant Hungarian Culture Foundation (Kulturinnov) just opposite the Mátyás Coronation Church on the central square atop the hill in old Buda. The Hungarian National Széchényi Library is planning an exhibit of Rusyn books and Hungary's National Gallery an exhibit of Rusyn art to coincide with the Rusyn World Congress. Aside from the delegations representing each of the founding organizations, guests and observers are also welcome. Contact the Rusyn organization in your country for further information.

OUR FRONT COVER

Cartoon by Fedor Vico from the Rusyn newspaper in Slovakia, *Narodný novynký* (Prešov), April 3, 1996.

A Forum on Carpatho-Rusyn Heritage

THE CARPATHO-RUSYN AMERICAN

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General inquiries concerning the Carpatho-Rusyn Research Center, and all communications concerning this publication, should be directed to:

Carpatho-Rusyn American
P.O. Box 192
Fairfax, VA 22030-0192
Phone: 703-691-8585
Fax: 703-691-0513

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NATIONAL MINORITIES IN UKRAINE INDIVIDUAL AND COLLECTIVE RIGHTS

On June 28, 1996, nearly five years after it became an independent state, Ukraine adopted a new constitution. It is in Ukraine where the largest number of Carpatho-Rusyns live, an estimated 600,000 to 800,000 in the Transcarpathian oblast (historic Subcarpathian Rus'). Despite a referendum held on December 1, 1991, in which 78 percent of the inhabitants of Transcarpathia voted for autonomy, the region was not granted autonomous status nor is any provision made for Transcarpathian autonomy in Ukraine's new constitution. The following is a commentary on the situation by Professor Ivan Turjanycja, deputy of the Transcarpathian regional parliament (Oblastna Rada) and premier of the Provisional Government of the Republic of Subcarpathian Rus'.—Editor

The Declaration of State Sovereignty of Ukraine was ratified on July 16, 1990, when Ukraine was still a part of the Soviet Union. This document declared that Ukraine guaranteed rights for the free national development of all nationalities living on its territory, and that it recognized the priority of common standards of international law above the standards of its own internal laws. Ukraine also ratified a law, "On National Minorities," but in fact it has remained, like many other laws concerned with human rights, declarative in nature and does not function in practice. The recently ratified Constitution of Ukraine also enumerates several general political and economic rights which were mentioned in the previous Constitution but which were never put into practice. This is why one must not expect that the present Constitution of Ukraine will guarantee these rights for its citizens, including its national minorities. The following analysis confirms this view.

Article 133 of the constitution proclaims that the Autonomous Republic of Crimea is a part of Ukraine and that it has its own constitution, parliament, and cabinet. This implies that Ukraine is a federative state. Nevertheless, Ukraine does not intend to recognize the historical record and to provide the status of autonomy to Subcarpathian Rus', which had become a part of Ukraine as an autonomous republic according to the illegal Fierlinger-Molotov treaty [signed June 29, 1945 between Czechoslovakia and the Soviet Union]. Six months later, on January 1, 1946, the Subcarpathian autonomous republic was liquidated unlawfully.

In Subcarpathian Rus', which is now called the Transcarpathian oblast (region), a plebiscite took place on December 1, 1991, and 78 per cent of the adult population in a secret ballot called for a return to the status of autonomy for their homeland. But this decision, adopted in accordance with the old and new constitutions and with the law "on referendums," remains unrecognized by the governing authorities in Ukraine. The Society of Carpatho-Rusyns, the Association of Indigenous Peoples, the League of the Nationalities of Transcarpathia, and other political parties have many times during the past five years appealed to the president and the parliament of Ukraine regarding this problem, but each time their requests, protests, and declarations have been ignored. And this despite the fact that according to Ukraine's old constitution and Article 40 of its new constitution the government is obliged to consider all appeals from citizens and to provide well-founded responses.

The Carpatho-Rusyns had an independent newspaper, *Podkarpats'ka Rus'*, which informed the citizens of their land about historical and political events that it was forbidden to discuss during the Stalin regime. In this newspaper, open appeals and declarations to the president and the parliament of Ukraine were published. At the instruction of the highest governing authorities of Ukraine, the Office of the State Prosecutor instructed the court to close the newspaper. But the Užhorod city and Transcarpathian regional courts did not find legal grounds to implement such a request. Despite legislation and article 34 of the Constitution of Ukraine, which proclaims the right to promote information freely for everyone, a presidential executive order directed the country's Supreme Court to repeal the previous decisions of the Užhorod and Transcarpathian Regional courts and it unlawfully closed the newspaper *Podkarpats'ka Rus'*. In such circumstances, how can one speak of freedom of speech?

Article 11 of Ukraine's new Constitution declares that the state assists in the consolidation and development of the ethnic, cultural, and linguistic character of all indigenous peoples. It is for this reason that in our land the Association of Indigenous Peoples was organized. But the state bodies unlawfully refuse to register that organization, and they discriminate against a doctor of science and professor of Užhorod State University only because he is the head of the association. How, therefore, can one speak of rights for the indigenous peoples of Ukraine?

Article 55 of the new Constitution of Ukraine states that each person has the right to appeal any decision of governmental bodies, and that to defend his or her rights the person may turn to an authorized representative who is concerned with human rights in the Parliament of Ukraine. But in our land nobody knows the name, address, or telephone number of this authorized representative. So far, not one of our entreaties addressed to the parliament has been answered. According to the law "on national minorities," Rusyns have the right to be Rusyns. Officially, however, they are still considered Ukrainians. Leonid Kravchuk, the former president of Ukraine, forbade the use of the term "Rusyn nationality" in official documents. And although all power structures admit such a decision is unlawful, they nonetheless continue to apply this restriction.

There is only one reason for such lawlessness. If Ukraine were to recognize Rusyns as a nationality, an autonomous Subcarpathian Rus' would be reborn. And if that were to happen, it might "run" from Ukraine to Europe?

Article 132 of the new Constitution proclaims that Ukraine will adopt the principle of decentralization and respect the historical, geographic, demographic, and other particular features of regions and their ethnic and cultural traditions. But in fact such legal guarantees are ignored, so that all attempts for Rusyns to have their own newspaper, to return to their nationality, to study their language in schools, to know their history and literature, and to develop their culture and keep their traditions are unable to be realized.

Without the support of Europe, present-day neo-Bolshevik Ukraine will never voluntarily and independently stop genocide against Subcarpathian Rusyns, which was started by Stalin in 1946 and still is going on.

Ivan Turjanycja, Chairman
Society of Carpatho-Rusyns
October 1996

RECENT EVENTS

Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. On April 26, 1996, the Senator John Heinz Regional History Center opened in Pittsburgh. The center, a magnificent nine-story structure, contains a core display which allows patrons to "walk through and experience" the history of western Pennsylvania. The immigrant experience portion of this display includes a Carpatho-Rusyn Greek Catholic funeral in a home in Homestead, Pennsylvania in 1910, complete with authentic Rusyn icons, customs, and even a recording of a funeral service sung in traditional Carpathian plainchant. Rusyn items donated by members of the Rusyn community are featured throughout other areas of the museum as well. The Rusyn display was coordinated by the Carpatho-Rusyn Research Center and the Carpatho-Rusyn Society. The Regional History Center is the second museum in Pittsburgh which features the Carpatho-Rusyns and their experience in America as part of its permanent display, the other being the Andy Warhol Museum.

Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. During Memorial Day weekend, May 30-31, 1996, more than 80,000 people attended the Annual Pittsburgh Folk Festival, highlighting the various ethnic groups which make up the city. The three-day festival, held at the David Lawrence Convention Center, featured 24 ethnic groups, among them the Carpatho-Rusyns, who were capably represented by the Slavjane Rusyn Folk Ensemble and the Carpatho-Rusyn Society. The Slavjane Ensemble performed authentic Carpatho-Rusyn material to an enthusiastic crowd which waits every year to see the Carpatho-Rusyns perform. The group also sponsored a booth, patterned after a Carpathian wooden church, featured traditional Rusyn foods, and was a focal point for the entire festival.

The cultural display was organized by the Carpatho-Rusyn Society and featured Rusyn Christmas Eve traditions from the village of Jakubjany (former Spiš county) in present-day Slovakia. The table was complete with authentic Rusyn Christmas Eve foods, and the costumes of the angel and Guba of the Jasličkari were featured, along with authentic festive Rusyn traditional dress from Jakubjany. The Society also sponsored the Carpatho-Rusyn booth in the marketplace section of the festival, selling Rusyn tee-shirts, mugs, audiotapes, Christmas ornaments, books, and a host of other Rusyn items.

A new addition this year was a hall of costumes. The Carpatho-Rusyn Society displayed authentic traditional dress brought from Europe—a woman's outfit from the village of Chyža in the former Ugocsa county, and a man's outfit from the village of Ol'šavica in former Spiš county.

Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. On August 18, 1996, the Carpatho-Rusyn Society sponsored a concert entitled "A Tour of Carpatho-Rus' in Music and Song" at the Frick Fine Arts Auditorium at the University of Pittsburgh. The concert featured Rusyn singer Beata Begeniova and her accompanist Michal Salak, both of Prešov, Slovakia. They performed a wide variety of Rusyn folk and religious songs accompanied by a folk orchestra and a choir of local Carpatho-Rusyn singers from the Pittsburgh area. The concert was a historic event in that it was the first concert by a European Rusyn performer in America sponsored by the Rusyn community since the fall of Communism. The con-

cert included a sing-along with the audience as well as songs from throughout the Rusyn regions of Europe. All music arrangements and orchestrations were done by Rusyn-American musician Jerry Jumba of McKees Rocks, Pennsylvania, who also directed the concert.

Cleveland, Ohio. On September 8, 1996, the city of Cleveland, in honoring its 200th anniversary, held a "One World Day" celebration in the Cleveland Cultural Gardens which various ethnic groups had renovated in preparation for this event. The Rusin Cultural Gardens, founded in 1937, were restored through the efforts of the Cleveland branch of the Carpatho-Rusyn Society, led by John Krenisky of Cleveland and Florence Orris of Broadview Heights, Ohio. The Society on that day staffed informational displays in its garden about Rusyns and Rusyn culture and sold Rusyn ethnic items and books. Members of the Cleveland branch created a banner for display in the garden that day. Prešov Rusyn singer Beata Begeniova and accompanist Michal Salak performed Rusyn folksongs on the main stage, and young members of the Carpatho-Rusyn Society in Rusyn traditional dress from Zemplýn, Už, and Marmaroš counties carried the Rusyn banner in the parade concluding the event. A number of Society members attended from Ohio, Pennsylvania, and Michigan.

Cottbus, Germany. On September 25-28, 1996, the local Sorbian Institute organized an international scholarly conference on the subject, Modernization of the Vocabulary of Europe's Regional and Minority Languages. Dr. Jurij Pan'ko of Šafárik University in Prešov, author of the recently published Rusyn-language terminological dictionary and orthographic dictionary, spoke at the Cottbus conference on the topic of the modernization of Rusyn vocabulary in eastern Slovakia.

Nieder Rickenbach, Switzerland. The Benedictine Monastery in this small Swiss village was the site of an international seminar, "Church Music in Various Slavic Traditions," held on September 27-29, 1996. The seminar was practical in nature, addressing problems faced by directors, voice teachers, and choristers. The eastern churches were represented by ten different traditions, including that of Carpatho-Rusyn church music. Speaking on that topic was Marija Chološnjaj a Vojvodinian cultural activist from Djurdevo, Yugoslavia.

Prague, Czech Republic. On October 22-23, 1996, the Society of Friends of Subcarpathian Rus' based in Prague sponsored a scholarly conference entitled Central Europe and Subcarpathian Rus'. More than fifteen scholars and cultural activists from Canada, the Czech Republic, Germany, Hungary, Slovakia, and Ukraine spoke on various aspects of the past and present situation of Rusyns in Subcarpathian Rus' (Transcarpathia) and in the Prešov Region of Slovakia. Of particular interest were talks by several Czechs, both scholars who analyzed the manner in which Rusyns and Subcarpathian Rus' have appeared as themes in Czech literature, as well as Czech novelists and poets who themselves have been inspired by their exposure to Rusyn culture. The conference was organized by Dr. Jiří Hořec, a noted Czech writer and founding chairman of the Society of Subcarpathian Rus'. The proceedings of the conference will be published in the series of booklets issued by the society.

SINCE THE REVOLUTION OF 1989

Kiev, Ukraine. On June 28, 1996, nearly five years since Ukraine declared its independence, the country adopted its first post-Communist constitution. Several clauses are of particular interest to Carpatho-Rusyns, of whom the vast majority in Europe live within the borders of Ukraine, specifically in that country's Transcarpathian oblast (historic Subcarpathian Rus').

Clause 2 of the constitution declares that "Ukraine is a unitary state." The only exception to this administrative framework is the Crimean peninsula, which has been granted the status of an autonomous republic called Crimea (Clauses 134-139). Ukraine's constitution does make provisions for "local self-government" (Clauses 140-146), but this applies only to the level of villages, groups of villages, or cities. This means there is no constitutional provision that would allow for the realization of autonomy (*samouprava*), which 78 percent of the inhabitants of Transcarpathia voted for their region on December 1, 1991, the very same day and on the same referendum that all citizens of Ukraine voted on their country's independence.

Clause 11 of Ukraine's constitution is also of interest to Carpatho-Rusyns, since it declares that aside from the Ukrainian nationality, the state "also assists in the development of the ethnic, cultural, linguistic, and religious distinctiveness of all indigenous peoples and national minorities of Ukraine." The problem with this otherwise democratically inspired clause is that the Ukrainian authorities do not recognize that Carpatho-Rusyns are distinct from Ukrainians. Therefore, they are unable to receive any governmental assistance to promote, for instance, the Rusyn language as an element of their distinctiveness as an indigenous people in the Carpathians.

It is not only within Ukraine that the new constitution fails to provide any cultural rights for Rusyns as a distinct people. The government of Ukraine is also concerned about the existence of Rusyns beyond its borders who are recognized as a distinct group in the states in which they live (Slovakia, Poland, Hungary, Yugoslavia). As such, they are entitled to and receive assistance for cultural activity from their respective governments.

Earlier in 1996, Ukraine's Minister for Nationalities and Migration, Volodymyr Jevtuch, stated that his ministry created a special "commission of experts" to study the "Rusyn problem." Minister Jevtuch declared from the outset that he considers Rusyns to be "Ukrainians with specific ethnographic characteristics," and that the government does not intend "to interfere in ethnocultural and ethnographic development." (Interview with Minister Jevtuch in *Novyny Zakarpattja*, 22 June 1996, p. 4). Such tolerance does not extend to those Rusyns who consider themselves a distinct people, however.

As for Rusyns elsewhere, the government of Ukraine protested to the government of Yugoslavia against the latter's hosting of the Third World Congress of Rusyns in May 1995. Twice in the course of 1996 parliamentary delegations from Ukraine protested to their counterparts in Bratislava against the existence of the Rusyn movement in Slovakia. Most recently, during the week of October 21,

1996, a governmental delegation from Kiev requested to meet in Bratislava with Slovakia's Ministry of Foreign Affairs in order "to discuss" one topic: why has the Rusyn language been approved for instruction in Slovak elementary schools?

Prešov, Slovakia. On August 22-25, 1996, the international organization for promoting the cultures of national minorities in Europe, La Maison des Pays, held its second congress at the Aleksander Duchnovyč Theater in Prešov. The meeting was jointly sponsored by Daniel Tarsis, General Secretary of the Council of Europe, and Ivan Hudec, Minister of Culture in Slovakia; its host in Prešov was the Rusyn Renaissance Society (Rusyn'ska Obroda).

Representatives from fifteen nationalities throughout Europe, including Occitans from France, Piedmontese from Italy, Lusatian Sorbs from Germany, and Roma (Gypsies) and Hungarians from Slovakia, met for three days under the leadership of the president of La Maison des Pays, André Roparz (Brittany) and the organization's general secretary, Marcel Meaufront (Provence). Among the topics discussed were concrete steps to improve the status of the languages and cultures of national minorities, to increase contacts and exchanges among minorities, and to expand the organization among the peoples of east-central Europe.

The Rusyns of Slovakia are one of the founding members of the Maison des Pays. At the Prešov meeting, Rusyns from all countries were present and their status was discussed in several presentations at the international meeting. Vasyľ Turok, chairman of the World Council of Rusyns, was elected vice-president of La Maison des Pays.

Prešov, Slovakia. On August 24, 1996, the World Council of Rusyns (Svitova Rada Rusyniv) met for the second time this year. Present were council members from all countries where Rusyns live: Aleksander Franko (Slovakia), Andrej Kopča (Poland), Paul Robert Magocsi (United States), Tibor Mikloš Popovyč (representing Gabor Hattinger, Hungary), Ivan Turjanycja (Ukraine), Michael Varga (Yugoslavia), and the chairman of the World Council, Vasyľ Turok.

Among the topics discussed were: (1) the upcoming Fourth World Congress of Rusyns to be held in Budapest, Hungary, in May 1997; and (2) the need for the World Council to reassert that its primary goals are cultural and socioeconomic and that it functions within the context of existing state structures in Europe. In that regard, the following resolution was adopted:

1. Any person who is a member of the Provisional Government (in Exile) of Subcarpathian Rus' may not be a member of the World Council of Rusyns.

2. In activities sponsored by the World Council of Rusyns and its organizations no member of the Provisional Government of Subcarpathian Rus' may participate in an official capacity representing the government-in-exile.

3. At the Fourth World Congress of Rusyns in Budapest, the World Council of Rusyns will adopt a formal resolution that distances itself from the Provisional (Exile) Government of Subcarpathian Rus'.

Five of the six voting members of the World Council accepted the resolution; one member (Ivan Turjanycja) was opposed. The resolution is to be published in the official publication of each member organization of the World Congress, including the *Carpatho-Rusyn American* of the Carpatho-Rusyn Research Center.

Užhorod, Ukraine. A literary scandal unfolded during the month of September 1996 following the publication a few months earlier of a collection of Rusyn poetry by the Subcarpathian writer Ivan Petrovcij. Entitled *Naši spivanky* (Our Songs), the work includes 24 poems of various length dealing largely with recent developments in the political and daily life of Subcarpathian Rus' (Transcarpathia).

Sometime in mid-September, a governmental advisor brought the book to Ukraine's president Leonid Kučma, who reportedly reacted with dismay to at least one poem, "Prizident na pidstavkŷ" (The President on a Prop), in which the author Petrovcij refers to Ukraine's first president, Leonid Kravčuk, as an eternal Communist, and to the present head of state, Kučma, as someone who cannot even speak Ukrainian.

Petrovcij's often satirical verses provoked even greater anger among the political opposition led by former dissident Vjačeslav Čornovil', who in the presence of several party leaders demonstratively proclaimed to President Kučma that Petrovcij's book of poems is "anti-Ukrainian, anti-presidential, anti-parliament, and anti-state." Čornovil's own popular party newspaper ran an extensive article entitled, "Transcarpathia, How Sad You've Become" (*Čas*, Kiev, September 20, 1996, p. 3), which expressed special fury over the poem, "Kolomŷjky for Galician Nationalists," in which Petrovcij writes:

Germans were once fascists,
As were the Magyars,
But the worst fascists in the world
Are Galician [Ukrainian] nationalists.

Spurred on by the Ukrainian displeasure all around him, President Kučma felt obliged to do something. He called his presidential representative in Transcarpathia, Serhij Ustyč, chided him for allowing the appearance of such a book in Ukraine, and requested that he question for possible legal charges the seven sponsors (many of whom hold local governmental positions in Transcarpathia) as to why they helped fund the book's publication. The Užhorod printing firm Patent has already been charged with printing seditious material, and the Union of Ukrainian Writers is considering expelling Petrovcij from its ranks.

For his part, Ivan Petrovcij is pleased that his book has become an instant "best-seller," and acting on his momentary fame, he has decided to enter the electoral race for a recently evacuated seat in Kiev's national parliament. Previously, Petrovcij was known as the author of several collections of poetry in Ukrainian as well as Ukrainian translations of French and Hungarian literature. *Naši spivanky*, written in the vernacular speech of his native village just east of Mukačevo, is his first book-length work in Rusyn. In a sense, the scandal over his most recent book—and the resultant fame it has provided—are what authors often hope might happen to them.

As one newspaper commentator wrote: "The scandal goes on, and there are already reliable rumors afloat that a World Committee has been established to defend the author and the sponsors of the politicized Rusyn volume *Naši spivanky*. Whatever the outcome, one thing is certain: this whole matter concerning Rusyns is sure to enter the pages of history." (*Edinstvo plus*, Užhorod, September 21, 1996, p.3).

Prešov, Slovakia. On October 26, 1996 a congress (*sejm*) of the Rusyn Renaissance Society (Rusyn'ska Obroda), the main civic and cultural organization of Rusyns in Slovakia, met to discuss the present and future status of their people. The congress reviewed the achievements of the past few years and discussed at length how to overcome the present financial crisis caused by the government's general cutback in subsidies to cultural organizations.

The congress adopted a working paper entitled, the "Rusyn Renaissance Society Until the Year 2000." This document outlined seven areas (structural problems, relations with political parties and churches, cultural activity, schools, cooperation with other organizations, the press and other mass media, the economy) in which the organization needs to direct its attention.

Among its main concerns are: (1) to obtain a Rusyn language radio program that would broadcast in the eastern part of the country as well as throughout Slovakia; (2) to assure Rusyn-language instruction in elementary schools at least two to three hours weekly; and (3) to establish a department of Rusyn Language and Culture at the Pedagogical Faculty of Šafárik University in Prešov no later than 1997. The document also reiterated its previous stance that it supports no particular political party and that it does not act in favor of either traditional Rusyn church to the detriment of the other. The organization does, however, support the use of the traditional Church Slavonic liturgy instead of Slovak in both Greek Catholic and Orthodox parishes where Rusyns form the majority.

Considering the high number of persons living in other parts of Europe and North America whose ancestors are of Rusyn heritage from Slovakia, the Rusyn Renaissance Society intends to call upon the Slovak National Cultural Association (Matice Slovenská) to establish a section devoted to Rusyns from Slovakia living abroad. With regard to possible cooperation with its Ukrainian-oriented rival, the Union of Rusyn-Ukrainians of Slovakia (SRUS), this will only be possible if "that organization will recognize and respect the existence of a distinctive Rusyn nationality" and cease using the artificial term *Rusyn-Ukrainian*.

The congress of the Rusyn Renaissance Society also created a new organizational structure. The coordinating committee will henceforth consist of the head and one other member from each of the regional clubs, and it will meet as a body twice a year. Day-to-day business will be conducted by a newly-created five-member executive board based in Prešov, comprised of the organization's new chairman, Vasyl' Turok; vice-chairman, Professor Myron Sysak; executive secretary, Aleksander Zozuljak; and two members, Peter Krajnjak and Fedir Vico.



Carpatho-Rusyn American
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A Forum on Carpatho-Rusyn Cultural Heritage



FROM THE EDITOR

Organizations founded to give encouragement and support to ethnic groups customarily engage in a number of activities geared to achieving those goals. The Carpatho-Rusyn Research Center is no exception. It has, for instance, published the quarterly *Carpatho-Rusyn American*, which for almost two decades was the only non-denominational English-language publication providing current news on Rusyns in the homeland and abroad, as well as scholarly articles, biographies of famous Rusyns, and travel and bibliographical information. The C-RRC has also encouraged and supported young Rusyn scholars in their work and has provided funds to aid our brothers and sisters in the European homeland as they struggle to maintain and develop their identity and aspirations as a people. Among yet other activities, the C-RRC has published numerous books, pamphlets, and maps, and provided these items for sale at book and information booths at both scholarly conferences and ethnic festivals.

All of these efforts have been exceptionally productive. Ethnic awareness among Americans of Rusyn background has flourished over the past two decades, ties between the Rusyn community here and in Europe have been strengthened, scholarly conferences now more than ever before include panels and papers on Rusyn-related topics, library collections around the world offer researchers and interested readers a large selection of Rusyn studies to choose from (a selection that will keep growing), and a grassroots organization, inspired and encouraged by the C-RRC and some of whose leaders are board members of the C-RRC—the Carpatho-Rusyn Society of Pittsburgh—is taking in new and enthusiastic members at a pace far beyond its wildest expectations. We are grateful for all of this and warmly extend our thanks to all who have supported the C-RRC in its work in terms of funds and voluntary help over the years.

There is yet another way in which the C-RRC is now able to encourage and support the development of Rusyn culture and this is through the awarding of the newly-established Steven Chepa Aleksander Duchnovyč Prize in Rusyn Literature. This is an award of \$1000 to be given annually for an outstanding book of poetry or fiction published in the Rusyn language. The award's intention is to promote the use of the Rusyn language in works that make a significant contribution to Rusyn literature. The official announcement indicates that volumes of fiction and poetry published between 1991 and 1996 are eligible for the 1997 prize. Three copies of each book should be submitted by the author or publisher, accompanied by a brief biographical statement about the author. The deadline for this year's prize is March 1, 1997.

The current international judging panel is chaired by Professor Elaine Rusinko, University of Maryland, who has written several articles on Rusyn literature and translated and wrote an introduction to Duchnovyč's 1850 play *Virtue is More Important Than Riches* (Columbia University Press, 1994; available from the C-RRC). The two other members of the panel are Professor Myron Sysak, Chairman of the Department of Russian Language and Literature at Šafárik

University in Prešov, Slovakia, and Dr. Maria Pavlovsky of Indiana University. Dr. Pavlovsky is a Slavic linguist trained in Hungary and the last doctoral student of the Carpatho-Rusyn scholar and poet, Emyljan Balec'kyj. The committee formulated the official announcement of the prize in several languages and distributed it in various Rusyn publications both in the United States and in all the other Rusyn-inhabited countries. The winner of the initial award will be announced at the Fourth World Congress of Rusyns to be held in Budapest, May 30-June 1, 1997.

The prize helps promote the use of Rusyn in literary works, and encourages Rusyn writers and poets to demonstrate that the Rusyn language is without question capable of expressing emotional experiences and intellectual concepts. The Slovak Studies Association Prize, the Shevchenko Prize for Ukrainian Literature, and the Mickiewicz Prize for Polish Literature are among numerous other examples of such awards. Our prize is appropriately named the Duchnovyč Prize after the Rusyn national awakener, writer, and dramatist of the nineteenth century, who stands as a powerful symbol of love for and devotion to the Rusyn people and Rusyn identity. Just as Duchnovyč drew attention to the plight of the Rusyns in the nineteenth century, so too it is hoped that this prize will bring contemporary Rusyns and the fruit of their creative impulses to international attention.

Finally, the Aleksander Duchnovyč Prize has been generously funded for the next five years by Steven Chepa of Toronto, president and chief executive officer of the Cheppa Corporation—a man with an impressive and varied background as a banker and business executive. Both Chepa's parents were Carpatho-Rusyns—his father emigrated to Canada from Subcarpathian Rus', his mother from the Lemko Region. Last year in their honor he funded the Polish, Slovak, and Ukrainian editions of the popular 24-page brochure on Carpatho-Rusyns produced by the C-RRC. Clearly, a special wisdom motivated Chepa's decision to support the C-RRC's work once again, this time a literary prize. By concretely rewarding exceptional work already accomplished, such prizes inspire the productive labor of creative talent in the future. When good wishes and promises of support are actually backed up by tangible aid, there will be positive results. The C-RRC's thanks to Steven Chepa is echoed a thousand-fold by others now and in the years to come.

OUR FRONT COVER

This image of two Rusyn dancers is a restylization of a poster image by Ivan Čizmar, produced originally for the annual Svidník Folk Festival in 1971. In 1978, Jerry Jumba, then music and vocal director, as well as choreographer and co-founder of the Pittsburgh-based Slavjane Folk Ensemble, created this drawing from the festival's poster. The graphic logo has become the representative image for the Slavjane Ensemble.

For nearly half a century following its unveiling in 1933, a nearly twenty-foot monumental statue and pedestal of Aleksander Duchnovyč, the nineteenth-century "national awakener" of the Carpatho-Rusyns, stood on the main square at the southern entrance to the city of Prešov in eastern Slovakia. In 1977, the statue was removed from its prominent spot to make way for the construction of a new Slovak Theater. There was no chance that the statue of a Rusyn national leader would be returned to stand in front of a new center of Slovak culture. Consequently, three years later, in 1980, when the Duchnovyč statute was re-erected, it was placed outside the old center of the city in a square along the Torysa River. (See the front cover of the *Carpatho-Rusyn American*, Vol. IV, No. 3, 1981).

A few years later, the center of Prešov was closed permanently to traffic, and cars and trucks were redirected around the city. The main road from western Slovakia now passes right by the statue, so that at present more people see Duchnovyč than ever before. To be sure, most drivers do not know that it is a Rusyn national leader who is looking over them.

Even fewer people know that the creator of the Duchnovyč statute was a young woman and the first professionally trained Carpatho-Rusyn sculptor, Olena Šinali Mandyč. Very little is known of her biography, and this despite the fact that she lived the last three decades of her life in eastern Slovakia's largest city, Košice. It was only recently that the correct spelling of her married name was determined, and most published references still list her as Mondyč. She is also incorrectly described in most sources as a native of eastern Slovakia.

Olena Šinali was born in 1902 in Giulești (Hungarian: Gyulafalva), a Romanian-inhabited Greek Catholic village which is now in Romania, but which at the time was in southern Máramaros county of the Kingdom of Hungary. Her father, Stepan Šinali, was an elementary school teacher originally from a village near Bardejov in eastern Slovakia. Olena was most influenced, however, by her mother Kateryna Kenedič, from whom she acquired a love of artistic creativity, and by her maternal grandfather, a worldly Greek Catholic priest who early on encouraged her budding extrovert personality and eventual Bohemian lifestyle.

After completing elementary classes in her father's school in Giulești, Olena was sent to Košice and Budapest to complete her secondary (*gymnasium*) education. In the interim, World War I had come to an end, southern Máramaros county became part of Romania, and the Šinali family returned to their native land which had by then become part of the new state of Czechoslovakia. In 1921, Olena went off to Czechoslovakia's capital of Prague, where for three years (1922-1925) she studied at the Academy of Fine Arts under the direction of the leading Czech sculptor of the time, Jan Šturs. After completing her formal studies, she married Ivan Mandyč, a law student from Subcarpathian Rus' who subsequently became her personal artistic promoter.

For the rest of the interwar period, the Mandyčes lived in Prague, although Olena's commissions for sculpture were linked closely to her Rusyn ancestral homeland. These included a series of busts of nineteenth-century national leaders for towns in Subcarpathian Rus' and eastern Slovakia, including Aleksander Duchnovyč in Sevljuš/Vynohradiv



(1925) and in Chust (1932), Jevhenij Fencyk in Užhorod (1926), Adolf Dobrians'kyj in Michalovce (1928) and in Užhorod (1929), and Aleksander Mitrak in Mukačevo (1931).

It was in 1927, however, that Mandyč received her first major commission—a larger than life-size standing figure of the founding-president of Czechoslovakia, Tomáš G. Masaryk. The statue and pedestal measured over 23 feet high and was erected in Užhorod on October 28, 1928 to commemorate the tenth anniversary of the founding of Czechoslovakia as well as to symbolize the relationship of Subcarpathian Rus' to the rest of the country. Her second major commission was the statue of Duchnovyč that still stands in Prešov and that was erected in 1933 following a successful fund-raising campaign among mostly local Carpatho-Rusyns who paid for the monument.

Mandyč's productive career as a sculptor was not to last long, however. Toward the end of the World War II, she and her husband moved to Mukačevo, which at the time was under Hungarian rule, but after Subcarpathian Rus' was annexed to the Soviet Union in 1945, the couple settled in Košice in eastern Slovakia. The conditions at the end of the war had a devastating effect on Olena's health, and despite her best efforts at modeling, she had lost feeling in her hands. For the next three decades she lived in Košice in virtual obscurity, working as a clerk in a clothing store.

Worse still was the fate of her artistic work. In 1939, the Hungarians dismantled her statue of president Masaryk, which after the war found its way to Czechoslovakia where the Communist authorities eventually melted it down for scrap metal. As recently as 1995, vandals destroyed the bust of Dobrians'kyj in the southeastern Slovak town of Michalovce. Fortunately, the creative work of Olena Mandyč on behalf of her Carpatho-Rusyn people remains alive in the impressive statue of Duchnovyč that stands along a main thoroughfare of Prešov and that is in full view of thousands of people everyday.

Philip Michaels

JOURNEY TO THE HOMELAND

In July 1996, the Carpatho-Rusyn Society of Pittsburgh and the Rusin Association of Minnesota co-sponsored a Rusyn Heritage Tour to major points of interest for Rusyn Americans in Poland, Slovakia, and Transcarpathia. Andrea Kaufmann, a high school English teacher of Rusyn background, traveled with the group and later recorded her thoughts and impressions. For information on this year's trip scheduled for early summer, contact the Carpatho-Rusyn Society, 125 Westland Drive, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania 15217.—Editor

This past summer, I joined approximately thirty-five of our members in a thoroughly memorable tour of our ancestral homeland in the Carpathian Mountains and surrounding lowlands of Slovakia, Poland, and Ukraine. In the words of a sister traveler, "It was the trip of a lifetime!" Indeed, it was. Each day was filled with rare experiences, opportunities to meet people, and places to see that many of us did not even know existed. I can only encourage each of you to join a future tour group whenever time, money, and health permit. The airline, tour bus, hotel accommodations, and food were of the highest quality.

Our tour leaders, John Righetti and Jerry Jumba, planned an enriching and full itinerary, tirelessly bringing to reality with almost alchemistic skill what had begun as an ambitious, alluring plan on paper, a dream. Their combined talents and humor served to make the tour one of joy, camaraderie, and invaluable learning. Our local guides, Eva and Tatiana, generously helped us with translations and negotiations. Csaba, our bus driver, transported us securely.

Although it is impossible to describe the richness of the whole experience on paper, as it is impossible to capture the vast beauty of the Carpathian Mountains on film, I feel moved to try and convey some of what I gained on this "1996 Carpatho-Rusyn Heritage Tour."

Of primary importance is the pride I feel in being Rusyn that has grown tremendously as a direct result of making this trip and learning more about the lives of our people. I am, admittedly, a beginning student of our culture, although I am probably not so different from many Rusyn Americans of my generation. My grandparents immigrated to the United States early this century. I grew up learning customs that surround Christmas and Easter, dancing to the music played by my uncle Bill Lechko, eating the delicious foods cooked by my mother Irene Rokoski, and attempting annually to

create *pysanky* with stylus and beeswax. As a young child I felt that my mother's family embodied some very special qualities, which I vaguely interpreted as artistic creativity and a deep wisdom stemming from an almost intuitive knowledge of nature. I enjoyed being with these relatives, and it was my experiences with them that shaped my notions of who the Rusyns are. I am happy to report that the people we met on our trip confirmed and concretized my notions.

That Rusyns are, indeed, a creative and artistic people, was confirmed when our group met and learned about several accomplished artists. On one of our first days of sightseeing, we learned about Nykyfor, a self-taught Lemko artist, who lived from 1895 to 1968 (see the biography in the *Carpatho-Rusyn American*, Vol. X, No. 2, p. 3). Due to family circumstances, he remained illiterate and untrained for any work. Throughout his early life, he begged on the streets of the attractive spa town Krynica, Poland. With a mighty belief in his talent, he drew copiously and gave to those he begged from detailed illustrations of various aspects of the town, its prominent buildings and stations, its stylish visitors, and its churches, bishops, and saints, done on any discarded paper he could find. Not until 1959, with an exhibition of his work in Paris, did the world see and recognize Nykyfor's talent. His grave marker, a mausoleum, bears the name Nikifor Krynicki, "Nikifor of Krynica." When the Polish government expelled all Rusyns from this southern region of Poland in 1948, they allowed Nykyfor to stay, but rather than acknowledge his Rusyn heritage, they gave him the name of the town, thereby absorbing him into their own culture. Now that the Communist government has dissolved, his correct Rusyn surname Drovnyak will soon be added to the tomb. Our group viewed Nykyfor's drawings as well as photographs of him at the Nikifor Museum (Museum Nikifora) in Krynica. In the nearby town of Nowy Sącz, another museum displays the largest collection of his drawings and sells prints of his work, which perhaps may become available here in the future through one of our associations.

The next Rusyn-Lemko artist we met, also in Krynica, is very much alive. He is Petro Trochanovskyj (pen name, Murjanka), a poet and also a cantor in the Orthodox church near his home. Our group enjoyed profound spiritual and musical experiences with Petro. One day, he took us through places significant and holy for Lemko Rusyns; the next evening he provided song and dance. We walked with him up the steep hill that eventually leads to his home. On the climb we first visited the cemetery with Nykyfor's grave and two churches. One is a large, new church, still under construction. The other is the small, old church that it will replace, and which presently serves up to 250 worshipers at a time, even though most are forced to stand out-of-doors. In this ancient, tiny church, Petro and Jerry chanted together a melodic prayer of haunting beauty, invoking the memory of our ancestors. Petro lives close to the top of the hill, beyond the churches, and we were invited to return there.

The next evening, after dinner, Petro and his teenage son prepared a glorious bonfire in their backyard. Kolbasi, soda, and beer appeared out of nowhere. An accordion appeared, too; Jerry played it and sang. Several friends of Petro and his son came to sing and eat with us. What a joy—to sit *on* a hill in the Carpathian range, one that your great-grandmother may have trod, to sit amongst a group of exuberant people, almost all of whom had Rusyn roots, to hear an evening full of songs all in Rusyn. It was incredible!



Jerry Jumba and Rusyn-American travelers in Krynica, Poland.



The grave of Lemko-Rusyn artist Nykyfor in Krynica, Poland.

Although Petro sang heartily for us and even danced a few steps, he did not recite any of his poems, which he reportedly delivers with passion. Nonetheless, the evening was a thrill, and I'm sure my fellow travelers would agree.

Another famous Rusyn from the past whose memory we encountered next was Aleksander Duchnovyč (1803-1865). A priest and a playwright, he served as canon of the Greek Catholic cathedral in Prešov, Slovakia, and also organized the Prešov Literary Society during the 1850s. He is remembered as the "national awakener" because, although he lived the first half of his life alienated from Rusyn culture, once he reaffirmed his Rusyn identity, he worked tirelessly through both art and politics to encourage his people to realize their full potential. As an educated man and a priest, he drew from his life the experiences which allowed him to write the first drama in the Rusyn language. Duchnovyč realized that illiterate, uneducated people could understand drama, as opposed to literature, and that the theater could have great socio-political and cultural significance for the Rusyns. In his play, *Virtue is More Important than Riches* (available from the Carpatho-Rusyn Research Center), he hoped to steer his flock away from the tavern by purposefully exposing alcoholism as a widespread weakness or disease that debilitated otherwise capable individuals. In addition, he dramatized the equally debilitating superstition that mislabeled competent, prosperous individuals as witches and friends of the devil, and not as they actually were—simply hard workers. Duchnovyč presented as alternatives education, disciplined work, and faith in God as the paths to security and happiness.

Learning of Nykyfor and Duchnovyč and meeting Petro affirmed my childhood impressions of the Rusyn people as talented and creative. Now I was ready for more Rusyn art, music, song, and dance. You will not be surprised, then, that it was great fun for me to visit the Warhola Family Museum

of Modern Art in Medzilaborce, Slovakia. While Andy Warhol's work was not to the taste of all members of our group, I felt that for the first time I understood it. Seeing the village of Miková where his parents had lived, driving through the mountains which were a part of their lives, and observing the church icons which first influenced his technique, I felt I grasped at least something about the genius of his work.

The main reason that exposure to Rusyn talents has boosted my ethnic pride is that all I had ever really known about Rusyns, besides our food and holiday customs, is that we were largely peasants, an underclass who had not made our mark in the world. Being in Europe brought that whole issue into clearer perspective for me. The Rusyns' peasant status, as I see it, has been a result of external factors that were surely out of our people's hands. So, I feel proud of our Rusyn talent. I myself happen to enjoy the arts and so it pleases me all the more when Rusyns have distinguished themselves through art and other creative endeavors.

I was also able to see, on the other hand, possibly why the Rusyns have remained in an inferior position for so long. First, I saw that Rusyns are a people without a country. They live throughout several countries in Europe, primarily in the three our group visited, and there they are a distinct group, identified by name and language, as well as by choice. In the countries that acknowledge them, they are a minority and often experience "minority" treatment. Even in the Transcarpathian region of Ukraine, where they are a majority, they remain unacknowledged and thereby disadvantaged. With no state of their own, they are dependent upon the good will of local governments to grant them recognition as well as the rights to educate themselves and publish in their own language. Geographically divided by the Carpathian Mountain ranges and politically divided by borders—and further divided by religious differences—the Rusyn people seem never to have been able to garner the collective strength necessary to gain control over their own lives.

Also, I saw that because over the centuries Rusyns have been positioned squarely in the middle of two or more major powers, they inevitably suffered the effects of the conflicts between those contending powers, none of whom found the Rusyns valuable, except as chattel. Hence, Rusyns have literally been caught in the middle, and today, still without control over their own political or economic lives, they remain the object of prejudice.

One example of prejudice against Rusyns was experienced by one of our fellow travelers. He was in a restaurant ordering food in his most polite and error-free Rusyn. In response to his order, though, the waiter laughed to his face out loud, and then returned to the service area, where he shared the joke with his fellow waiters. All laughed except one. This last waiter then came to his table and asked, "Are you Rusyn?" to which he nodded. The waiter add, "Me, too." Somehow, when I see my own people stifled by the effects of disadvantage, I cannot help feeling even greater sympathy for other peoples in the world who are objects of prejudice because they cannot succeed socially, economically, or politically. The thousands of hard-working, educated, and prosperous descendants of Rusyns who live in the United States and Canada attest to the capabilities of our people when they are free to thrive. Even the youngest member of our tour group, a ten-year-old girl, could see the difference that opportunity makes in the life of an individual let alone a whole people.

Since arriving home, I have reread chapter one of *The Rusyns of Minnesota* by William Duly (available from the C-RRCC), in which he discusses "Rusin Historical Forces in Europe." Now that I have actually walked on the soil of the Carpathians, the history of the migrations, politics, and religious developments affecting our ancestors makes more sense to me. I can visualize the Lemko Region, the Prešov Region, and Transcarpathia. I know where the Dukl'a Pass is and why it is important. I have experienced the need to know four languages (Polish, Slovak, Ukrainian, and Rusyn) in three countries. Concrete, personal experience has added the dimension of reality to my previously abstract and incomplete perceptions. I have become much more aware that our people were subjugated for centuries and are still a subordinate culture. More importantly, it has become clearer to me that although subordination has influenced our identity, it does not describe, or prescribe, that identity. William Duly explains in his introduction that occupying the position of a subordinate culture limits the markers a people have by which to distinguish their culture from others, that is, it limits the number of channels through which people can express themselves. Therefore, because Rusyns have been a border people inhabiting lands situated between major powers, they have always occupied the position of a subordinate culture, a situation which has hampered our people's identity as well as their general development.

This brings me to my next, and last, point. I was grateful to discover that Rusyn culture is not dead. It is not just a memory of parents or grandparents to be passed down in some vague, dreamy form, only to be lost in the mists of receding time. I now know that Rusyn culture will not die with my mother's generation, nor even with mine. It will exist for my children to explore, to know, to enjoy, and to transmit. A few specific experiences convinced me that Rusyn culture is very much alive, that it is being lived, and that it is being expanded by young Rusyns. I learned this as our group not only visited seventeenth-century churches, mute testaments of our past, but also met twentieth-century people, actively involved with the present.

Young people sang for us at Petro's kolbasi roast. As I mentioned earlier, friends of Petro and his son, all members of their church, joined them in an evening of singing Rusyn songs for our enjoyment. The teenagers sang in robust voices with ease and gusto. They sang their own Rusyns songs. They clearly owned them. The evening was a thrilling experience precisely because our entertainers were young people.

Then, on the evening of our arrival in Prešov, Slovakia, our group was surprised to be feted with a fancy dinner and live entertainment in a beautifully decorated dining room of our hotel. Musicians from the performing group, Šarišan—four young men in traditional garb: two fiddlers, an accordionist, and a bassist—played and sang throughout the evening. They played, all with professional ease and great energy, the entire list of Rusyn music that our tour leaders requested. This music was obviously a vibrant part of their lives, not something they had dusted off for our benefit.

Both these experiences provided a frame through which I could imagine the future. The musicians, like Petro's singers, are the same age as my children. Who knows, they may meet each other one day. The children of all these musicians certainly will learn Rusyn songs. Hopefully, my children and grandchildren will learn and know them, too.



Andrea Kaufman and her mother outside the Warhola Family Museum of Modern Art in Medzilaborce.

Hanka Servicka, another talented and accomplished professional artist, sings in a plaintive and beautiful voice. The freshness of her work promises that Rusyn music has a future as well as a past. Her repertoire includes old songs, and she writes new ones in traditional style. One evening, our group was graced by her company in our hotel dining room, where she sang two lovely songs. Both the folklore ensemble Šarišan and Hanka Servicka record on cassettes and CD, so their music, which helps me to feel connected to my heritage, is available to all.

Still another group of artists demonstrates the Rusyn ability to promulgate the artistic heritage, despite obstacles. The Transcarpathian Folk Choir, based in Užhorod, Ukraine, gave a special performance for our group. Again we were inspired by the fact that its members are Rusyns. In Transcarpathia, Rusyns comprise a majority of the population, but they are not acknowledged as a distinct people by the Ukrainian government. Therefore, performing Rusyn songs and dances puts them in a risky position. Yet, they continue their performances, albeit calling their material "Transcarpathian," and presenting two or three Ukrainian dances during each performance. These musicians and dancers are of all ages, and represent the spirit of the Rusyn people, reaching from the past, participating in the present, anticipating the future. We can only hope that the future allows for increased liberty for Rusyns to share their culture openly and proudly.

I cannot close without mentioning the experience which was probably the most profound of all for many of us, and the one which invites each of us into the Rusyn future. I am referring to the encounter with our European relatives for the very first time. That experience was unique for each of our travelers, but meaningful and emotional for all. Knowing people over there and caring about them enriches one's experience of the place. I, and perhaps others as well, now feel strongly motivated to learn the Rusyn language so that I can correspond with my cousins and read the moving poems of Petro Murjanka-Trochanovskyj. I would also love to learn Rusyn dances and hear Rusyn stories and folk tales.

So many more things about our trip are worth sharing, but I leave it to others to describe those aspects of our journey. To those of you with whom I travelled, you were wonderful travelling companions. To the rest of you, I hope you are able to go in the future.

Andrea Kaufman
Woodmere, New York

INTERETHNIC CONFLICT, ALLIANCE, AND IDENTITY IN THE HISTORY OF THE SLAVJANE FOLK ENSEMBLE

The following article is by Robert Carl Metyl', a doctoral candidate in ethnomusicology at the University of Pittsburgh who has just returned from more than a year's research and fieldwork on Rusyn traditional music and contemporary culture in eastern Slovakia. Portions of this article have been published in a collection on the music of ethnic minorities in Central Europe, entitled Echo der Vielfalt [Echoes of Diversity], eds. Ursula Hemetek and Emil H. Lubej (Vienna, 1996).—Editor

Slavjane, which means “the Slavs,” is a dance, song, and instrumental youth ensemble based in western Pennsylvania and consisting of about fifty-five performers ranging in age from five to nineteen. It is an egalitarian, non-professional performing arts collective, whose current bylaws stipulate: “All performing members are required to participate in all phases of performance, including singing, dancing, and playing of a musical instrument to the best of their ability.” Performing members receive instruction from Slavjane’s adult directors in dancing, singing, and the playing of one or two musical instruments. The organization has an informal one-month trial period for new performing members, but conducts no auditions. Slavjane has been in existence under its current name since the early 1970s, but has direct predecessors in other performing arts groups which were active in the 1950s and 1960s. Among the Pittsburgh-area predecessors to Slavjane, on the basis of membership and sponsorship, were the Western Pennsylvania Byzantine Catholic Chorus (predominantly an adult performing group), Karpatho-Rus’, and the Slav Cultural Dancers.

Slavjane’s Current Status

The group’s leader is its choreographer and program director, Jack Poloka, an active figure in Pittsburgh area Slavic performing arts since the 1950s. Its headquarters is the Holy Ghost Byzantine Catholic Church in McKees Rocks, Pennsylvania, just outside Pittsburgh. Slavjane is co-sponsored by the Greek Catholic Union, or GCU, a fraternal insurance corporation, founded in Pennsylvania in 1892 as the *Sojedenenije Greko-Kaftoličeskich Russkich Bratstv*, or the Union of Greek Catholic Rusyn Brotherhoods. The majority of Slavjane’s adult officers and trustees are of Rusyn descent, as is nearly one-half of its artistic staff and approximately twenty-five percent of its performing members. Slavjane is governed by a board of officers democratically elected by the organization’s parents’ group. The parents’ group plays a vital role in supporting the performing members in a variety of ways, including making costumes, transporting performers to and from engagements, fundraising, and performing music for recordings used to supplement live music at Slavjane rehearsals and performances.

The Slavjane community is characterized by intergenerational continuity, which is expressed by parents in conversations and is also in programs, bylaws, and other related publications. For example, the program notes to Slavjane’s 1994 Eighteenth Annual Concert state the following: “Our heritage is a rich legacy passed on lovingly from one generation to the next. [It] is truly [a] cherished bond between

the past, present, and future. Slavjane’s goal is to preserve and share this legacy with our family, friends, and neighbors.”

Slavjane’s intergenerational nature is underscored by the fact that a number of the parents of children who perform with the group were themselves performing members of the ensemble when they were children and young adults in the 1970s. For instance, Jack Poloka’s granddaughter is a performing member of Slavjane, as were all of his four children, including Dean Poloka, who is Slavjane’s current associate choreographer. Dean is an amateur folklorist who has conducted participant-observational fieldwork among Rusyn and Slovak traditional performing artists in the European homeland. Also, Slavjane’s president, Greg Fejka, related through marriage to Jack Poloka, is a Slavjane alumnus with two children now performing in the current group.

Slavjane is the official representative of culture for the predominantly Rusyn-descent Byzantine Catholic Archdiocese of Pittsburgh. The Rusyns of the greater Pittsburgh area, represented by Slavjane, are chartered members of the Pittsburgh Folk Festival, a popular annual public event that highlights the traditional cultures of many ethnic groups in western Pennsylvania. Slavjane also appears at a variety of other venues throughout Pennsylvania and several neighboring states. In the 1970s, the ensemble performed traditional American and Slavic material on the grounds of the Statue of Liberty in New York harbor. The group has also performed at the Epcot Center in Orlando, Florida, and at the Lincoln Memorial in Washington, D.C. For many, the highlight of Slavjane’s history was its June 1992 performance at the Thirtieth Annual Festival of Culture and Sport in Medzilaborce, Slovakia.

The ethnic “heritage” and “legacy” of the Slavjane ensemble is far from homogeneous. What is called “our heritage” is not that of one discrete European ethnic group, but rather an accretion of several eastern European heritages represented by the ethnically diverse membership of the ensemble itself. This heterogeneity becomes apparent through the simple observation of physical objects owned by parents and performers present during a Slavjane rehearsal. One is confronted by a puzzling and seemingly incongruous array of messages conveyed by the diverse media, whether T-shirts, car bumper stickers, or decorative instrument case decals. One encounters potentially conflicting messages such as “Kosovo je Srpska” (Kosovo is Serbian) on one instrument case resting alongside another with a souvenir sticker of the “Jadrany Junior [Croatian] Tamburitizans,” yet the respective owners of these instruments dance happily together nearby. As one would expect, shirts worn by some parents speak of their Rusyn ethnicity, with such messages as “Carpatho-Rusin, Someone Special,” and “Russka Dolina University.” Russka Dolina, or “Rusnak Valley,” is the popular name of one section in the working-class Pittsburgh neighborhood of Greenfield. The valley received its name thanks to its concentration of Rusyn immigrants and their descendants, and its large, highly visible Rusyn Byzantine Catholic church, St. John Chrysostom, the headquarters of Slavjane’s predecessor, the Western Pennsylvania Byzantine Catholic Chorus. Also visible at Slavjane rehearsals and performances are shirts of parents bearing the designations, “Czechoslovakia” and “Magyarország” [Hungary], accompanied by correspond-

ing ethnic and national emblems. Vanity license plates on a number of parents' cars read SLAVJANE, and one may also see bumper stickers that communicate ethno-national proclivities, including messages of Slovak orientation.

The heterogeneous eastern European ethnic composition of Slavjane's community, indicated by the personal property of its performers and members, is reflected in the image of the ensemble's pan-Slavic repertory and vice versa. This heterogeneous pan-Slavic image is also projected outward to the general public, attracting patronage from a heterogeneous admixture of patrons, including Serbian, Croatian, Slovenian, and Slovak groups. Slavjane's directors transmit and reinforce this image by customarily announcing at performances that the group "performs the traditional music and dance of many Slavic peoples, specializing in that of the Carpatho-Rusyn people."

A Word on Rusyn Identity in Relation to Ukrainian and Slovak Identity

Of particular interest is the oppositional relationship to Rusyns on the part of Pittsburgh-area Ukrainians and Slovaks. American Rusyns have experienced the greatest conflict with American Ukrainians, especially those originating from western Ukraine (Galicia). By contrast, the Pittsburgh-area Slovak response to Rusyns, while not always idyllic, has been characterized by a greater degree of tolerance. This general attitudinal difference on the part of Slovaks and Ukrainians to the concept of Rusyn ethnicity may be attributed in part to the Slovaks' readiness to recognize Rusyns as a separate and distinct people on the basis of their language and culture. Slovaks are a West Slavic people who speak a West Slavic language and are predominantly Roman Catholic or Lutheran. Rusyns, by contrast, are an East Slavic people who preserve an East Slavic set of Rusyn dialects and adhere primarily to eastern forms of Christianity, whether Byzantine/Greek Catholic or Orthodox. Since Ukrainians are also East Slavs, it is simpler to argue that Rusyns are ethnologically Ukrainian than to argue that they are Slovak.

The issue of Rusyn identity and Ukrainophilism is more complex and problematic when one considers the activities of Ukrainophile Rusyns in eastern Slovakia. The only organization representing Rusyns in Slovakia before the Revolution of 1989, KSUT (*Kul'turnyj sojuz ukrajins'kych*

trudjaščych/Cultural Union of Ukrainian Workers), has been criticized for being a vehicle for ukrainianization and a contributor to the erosion of Rusyn identity in eastern Slovakia. Careful analysis reveals, however, that while ukrainianization was part of its agenda, KSUT also sponsored, organized, and supported many traditional performing arts groups and performance events devoted to local Rusyn culture. The foremost example is the annual June folklore festival in Svidník (first staged in Medzilaborce in 1955), which showcases hundreds of traditional Rusyn performers. Since Czechoslovakia's Velvet Revolution of 1989, KSUT's successor SRUSR (*Sojuz rusyniv-ukrajinciv Slovac'koji Respublyky*/Union of Rusyn-Ukrainians of the Slovak Republic) has increased its efforts toward the propagation of local Rusyn performing arts. An outstanding example of this is the annual *Makovyc'ka Struna* concert (established in 1973) which is held in Bardejov each December under the artistic direction of Andrej Karško, a founding member of PULS. *Makovyc'ka Struna* features dozens of local Rusyn solo and duo vocalists who perform traditional, yet innovative and little-heard Rusyn folksongs from eastern Slovakia. Many Rusyn "star" singers of eastern Slovakia first achieved lasting public recognition through their performances at *Makovyc'ka Struna*. These include Anna Servicka and the male duo Vasilenko and Džupin, who were honored in 1996 as recipients of gold cassette awards in Slovakia for outstanding sales of their recordings of Rusyn songs. Many Rusyn songs which have become classic favorites in eastern Slovakia—including "Švit' mišjačku" (Shine, Moon), performed by the male duo Lukacko-Karafa, received considerable exposure through the venue provided by *Makovyc'ka Struna*.

Slavjane's contacts in Slovakia have been with the Rusyn Renaissance Society, an organization with no Ukrainian orientation comprised of many former members of KSUT, hence the focus of the present essay on that relationship.

The Early Years of Performing Arts and The Puzzle of Identity

A look back in history reveals that conflict with Pittsburgh's Ukrainian community and cordial relations with the local Slovak community already characterized Slavjane's proto-ensemble, the Western Pennsylvania Byzantine Catholic Chorus. The chorus debuted at the First Annual Pittsburgh Folk Festival in 1956, and performed under the ethnic designation *Carpatho-Russian*. It consisted of adult members of several local Byzantine Catholic parishes, including Jack Poloka. The group's transformation from a predominantly liturgical chorus performing exclusively for "insiders" to a traditional performing arts ensemble geared to the general public resulted from the meeting of two individuals: Poloka and Dick Crum, the festival's organizer.

Crum was then the director of the world-renowned Duquesne University Tamburitians, an ever-popular university student ensemble with a predominantly pan-Slavic repertory. At the beginning of his association with Poloka and his "Carpatho-Russian" circle, Crum expressed open bewilderment at its members' idiosyncratic and multifarious relationship to their own ethnicity. He challenged them to justify their use of the name *Russian*, since their ancestral homeland was geographically far removed from Russia. Moreover,



Slavjane co-founders Jack Poloka and Jerry Jumba at the Family Food and Fun Fair sponsored by Saint John's Orthodox Church, October 1995, in Ambridge, Pennsylvania.

several members of the early "Carpatho-Russian" ensemble socialized freely and even performed with the festival's Slovak ensemble. Perhaps more puzzling was the fact that although the "Carpatho-Russians" all either spoke or understood a language resembling Ukrainian, the "Carpatho-Russians" and Ukrainians never mixed and, in fact, viewed one another with enmity.

Throughout the late 1960s and early 1970s, the group experienced several name changes, including Karpato-Rus' and The Slav Cultural Dancers. The latter name was predictive of what would become not only the group's future name, Slavjane, but also its eventual pan-Slavic orientation.

The 1970s Synthesis of Rusyn Identity and a Pan-Slavic Repertory

In the early 1970s, several important elements aligned to produce the requisite conditions for Slavjane's consolidation of the Rusyn identity and its expansion of its repertory and patronage base. Among the primary factors were (1) the effect of the writings of the historian Paul R. Magocsi; (2) the sponsorship of the Greek Catholic Union; and (3) the adoption by Slavjane of an open membership policy.

Influenced in part by the work of Professor Magocsi, Slavjane began identifying itself specifically as Carpatho-Rusyn at public, interethnic events. The Rusyn fraternal insurance corporation, the GCU, became the ensemble's co-sponsor. An intensive development and expansion of the ensemble's Rusyn repertory was also realized during this period, largely through the inspired and multifaceted creative efforts of Jerry Jumba, who from 1971 to 1980 collaborated with Poloka as the ensemble's co-director. Slavjane's affirmation of Rusyn ethnicity peaked in June 1992, when it was honored by the Rusyn Renaissance Society as the first Rusyn-American ensemble invited to perform in the European homeland at the Thirtieth Annual Festival of Culture and Sport in eastern Slovakia. The location of the festival, Medzilaborce, is also the site of the Warhola Family Museum of Modern Art, a short distance from the Rusyn village of Miková, from which the Pittsburgh-born artist Andy Warhol's Rusyn parents emigrated. The cost of Slavjane's trip was paid principally by the Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts in New York City.

In spring and summer of 1993, Jack Poloka's son, Dean Poloka, returned to eastern Slovakia to work with members of the Rusyn Renaissance Society in Prešov, as well as to rehearse with, and collect repertory from, the traditional performing arts companies, PULS and Šarišan. Dean returned to Pittsburgh in the summer of 1993 to instruct Slavjane in the new Rusyn and Prešov-Region material he collected. It has been modified to meet the needs of a youth group, and is now included in Slavjane's performance repertory.

In the early 1970s, the group changed its name to "Slavjane," meaning "the Slavs," and for the first time it opened its membership to non-Rusyns, including non-Slavs and non-Catholics. This policy resulted in an influx of new, multiethnic, multireligious members as well as a diversification of repertory. The changes reflected Jack Poloka's professional vision for the group, which was influenced by

three factors: (1) his pluralistic aesthetic and social sensibility; (2) his own dual Rusyn and Croatian origins; and (3) his admiration for the success and exposure of the Duquesne University Tamburitans.

In 1973, Slavjane's current president, Greg Fejka, was accepted with a full academic scholarship into the Duquesne University Tamburitans. From 1973 to the present, the Duquesne University Tamburitans have accepted a total of thirty-one Slavjane alumni among their ranks with academic scholarships. As a result, Slavjane became known as South Slavic folklore specialists, and by the mid-1980s was being engaged by the local Slovenian and Croatian communities to represent *their* respective cultures at the Pittsburgh Folk Festival. Since the successful cultivation and growth of this new South Slavic patronage base, Slavjane has been regularly hired to perform for many American Serbian, Croatian, and Slovenian organizations, church festivals, and junior tamburitza groups.

Aside from the Slavic world, Slavjane's performance repertory includes material from other European cultures. Examples of the latter include the Austrian folk song "Edelweiss," sung in English, an Italian instrumental medley, and several Ashkenazic Jewish folk instrumentals. Such variety of repertory and patronage together with its unique pan-Slavic Rusynophile orientation is what distinguishes Slavjane from other ensembles. The group's orchestra contains South Slavic tamburitza ensemble instruments as well as western European band instruments. Tamburitza ensemble instruments are sometimes utilized even during performances of Rusyn material, resulting in a stylistically syncretic blend of music and instruments.

Slavjane's non-professional status, coupled with the characteristic intensity and spontaneity of its performances, prompted one American reviewer, Susyn Mihalasky, familiar with "the exacting regimentation, synchronization, and controlled emotional discipline of East European folk dancers" to refer to the Slavjane's performance in Medzilaborce as "controlled chaos" (*Carpatho-Rusyn American*, Vol. XV, No. 3, 1992, p. 11). At the same time, the Rusyn journalist and singer Anna Kuzmjakova, of the Prešov-based Rusyn newspaper, *Narodný novynký*, witnessed the same performance as the above reviewer, and wrote that "the group Slavjane, from the American city Pittsburgh, truly has an authentic repertory, when considering its preservation of many Slavic attributes" (*Narodný novynký*, 15 July 1992).

Through the combined channels outlined above, Slavjane has become the most visible purveyor of Rusyn traditional performing arts in western Pennsylvania, and is now the most significant Rusyn performing arts group anywhere in the United States. Its reputation has been enhanced by exposure at the Pittsburgh Folk Festival and other venues, where it consistently announces at all performances and to all audiences, that while it "performs the repertory of many Slavic peoples," its "area of specialization is the traditional music and dance of *the Rusyn people*." Thus, Slavjane has become the principal local symbol of Rusyn culture to the general public, to Orthodox as well as Byzantine Catholic Rusyn Americans, to other ethnic groups, and to de-ethnicized Americans, or Americans of Rusyn background with allegiances to other ethnic and religious groups.

Slavjane in an Interethnic Context: The Ukrainian and Slovak Responses

In the essay, "Karpaty: koliska alebo križovatka balad?" (The Carpathians: The Cradle or the Crossroads of Ballads), Orest Zilins'kyj describes the Carpathian Mountain region as "a crossroads of influences borne in merchants' wagons and artisans' bundles by pilgrims, seasonal farmworkers, wandering soldiers, and beggars." Slavjane's Rusyn repertory also occupies a crossroads, in that it contains a number of popular folk pieces readily recognized by a mixed American audience, including members of various Slavic ethnicities and Hungarians. One may find in its programs many examples of Rusyn folk tunes, texts, and dances that are either shared by or very similar to those of the dominant ethnic groups of the states they inhabit, i.e., Ukrainians, Slovaks, and Poles. This recognizability of repertory on an interethnic level, coupled with the Rusyns' status in Europe as a stateless ethnic minority, has elicited divergent reactions to Slavjane's performances from sundry ethnic groups.

For example, the ensemble's Rusyn performances in the 1970s inspired militant reactions from Pittsburgh-area Ukrainian Americans. At one such event, the 1972 Allegheny County Fair in greater Pittsburgh's South Park, a Rusyn group was scheduled to follow the performance of a Ukrainian group. A disturbance ensued when the Ukrainians refused to vacate the stage for an extended period, temporarily barring the Rusyn group's entrance. Eventually, the Ukrainians acquiesced and allowed the Rusyns to perform, reportedly under the threat of police intervention. On another occasion in the 1970s, when Slavjane's turn came to perform at the Sto-Rox Nationalities Festival in McKees Rocks, the master of ceremonies, a well-known media figure in local Ukrainian-American cultural circles, declined to introduce

the Rusyn group as Rusyn. Then in 1979, when Slavjane was scheduled to appear at the Pittsburgh Folk Festival, a representative or representatives of the festival's Ukrainian contingent sent an angry, emotional letter to the festival's display chairman that decried the manner in which "others rape our heritage," and "pray[ed] God we can be spared this persecution in Pittsburgh." The letter ended with the terse statement, "If you want two Ukrainian groups, we [the Ukrainians] can accommodate." Poloka and others clearly recall how in 1979 the Ukrainian contingent openly sought to prevent the Rusyns from appearing at the Pittsburgh Folk Festival, claiming "double representation" of Ukrainian ethnicity.

Poloka hastens to add that in recent years such expressions of antagonism have diminished markedly. Recent reports of cooperation between Ukrainian- and Rusyn-American cultural activists augur well for a more harmonious future. That some of the rigidity of the past has relaxed may be deduced from the 1994 participation of a Slavjane graduating senior and new Duquesne University Tamburitzan inductee, Robert Bartko, who is of Rusyn descent, in both Slavjane and the local Ukrainian group, Poltava.

Nevertheless, Slavjane has not yet been engaged to perform at a Ukrainian function, and it has modified its repertory somewhat to minimize possible antagonistic reactions from Pittsburgh-area Ukrainian Americans. An example of Slavjane's deference to local Ukrainian-American cultural activists is its avoidance of Hucul costumes, which they had used from 1976 until approximately the early 1980s. While there is no attempt to exclude systematically *all* transregional Rusyn and Ukrainian material from Slavjane's performance repertory, its inclusion is not specifically designed to attract Ukrainian patronage.



Members of Slavjane with American Byzantine Catholic Archbishop Judson Procyk and Reverend John Kudrick at an annual concert, April 1995.

Conversely, Slavjane has maintained a relatively cordial relationship with the Pittsburgh-area Slovak community since the earliest days of the proto-ensemble in 1956. For example, Slavjane performed at the annual convention of the National Slovak Society held in Pittsburgh in 1973. More recently, they appeared at the Second and Third Annual Slovak Heritage Festivals held at the University of Pittsburgh in 1992 and 1993, which were attended by many prominent individuals in the Slovak-American community.

An examination of Slavjane's engagement sheets and program notes from the early 1970s to the present registers many performances that intentionally included what may be termed as Rusyn and Slovak "crossover pieces," that is, transregional folk songs shared by Rusyns and Slovaks that are popular in both diasporas. Examples include "Od Ungvara," "Vezti zajdu," and "A ja taka čarna." These pieces have customarily been included in order to please Slovak Americans who patronize Slavjane's performances, and to address the substantial Rusyn contingent that originated in the Prešov Region of the former Austro-Hungarian Empire that is now eastern Slovakia. Nowadays Slavjane's directors are so sensitive to the large number of its patrons and fans of Rusyn and Slovak ethnicity who originated in eastern Slovakia that at Slavjane performances they commonly announce, both aloud and in their program notes, that the group "specializes in the music and dance of the Carpatho-Rusyn people of eastern Slovakia."

The familiarity of many Slovaks with the transregional, transethnic Rusyn repertory, and their enthusiasm for it, indicates not only tolerance of Rusyns and even admiration of their traditional culture, but also *the presence of Rusyn Americans in the audience who have adopted Slovak ethnicity, some of whom may not even be aware that they are of Rusyn descent*. A remarkable demonstration of the prevalence of such Rusyn Americans occurred during the Second Annual Slovak Heritage Festival at the University of Pittsburgh in the fall of 1992. Slavjane's sound equipment malfunctioned during the performance of a dance to a prerecorded instrumental arrangement of the song "Červená ruža trojaka," ("Red Roses Three"). Instead of halting their performance, the performers continued to dance without music. The surprised and delighted "Slovak" audience responded enthusiastically by singing the song to the end of the dance in the East Slavic language of the Rusyn minority culture, which is quite distinct from Slovak, the West Slavic language of the dominant culture.

The performing arts have been a unifier not only for many Rusyn Americans in families and communities both deethnicized and intact, but also for Rusyn-American performing artists, their friends and supporters, and their European Rusyn counterparts. John Righetti, Pittsburgh-area delegate to the Second World Congress of Rusyns, held in Krynica, Poland in 1993, described his bus trip from Slovakia to Poland with other delegates to the congress as follows:

As we travelled, the mountains got higher, the villages tinier and more scenic, and there was the singing. Although we Rusyns came from several different countries, we had as a binding tie our culture, manifested here in our folk music. "Červená ruža" . . . and many others were songs shared

by all of us who had gathered together for the same purpose, the perpetuation of a living Rusyn culture (*Carpatho-Rusyn American*, Vol. XVI, No. 2, 1993, p. 2).

The transregionality of the Rusyn repertory and the openness and tolerance engendered by Slavjane's pluralistic open membership policy and its pan-Slavic repertory have cut across ethnic and religious lines and unified Slavjane's intercultural and multiethnic members, patrons, and fans. By adopting such a course of action, Slavjane has significantly increased the visibility of Rusyns as a distinct ethnic group to the community itself as well as to the public at large. Owing to historical circumstances, its decision constitutes a *de facto* act of political advocacy.

Slavjane's tolerance of a broad range of individuals and groups, regardless of ethnicity or religion, and its perceptible lack of the kind of factionalism that at times is found in other ensembles, reflects an ethos shared by many in our field, and expressed succinctly by Jack Poloka: "It is through learning about other cultures that one learns how best to appreciate one's own."

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Robert Carl Metyl'
Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

A Forum on Carpatho-Rusyn Heritage

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Carpatho-Rusyn American
P.O. Box 192
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Staff Members

Barbara Kopitan Corbiey, *Distribution Manager, C-RRC*
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PO Box 192

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